

Romains 4 et Genèse 17

Quelle énigme et quelle solution? (*)

Sans passer en revue toutes les énigmes posées par Rm 4, nous n'en considérerons ici qu'une seule, assez aisément formulable: si Paul veut montrer que la situation d'Abraham est normative pour tous les croyants, aussi bien juifs que non juifs, il ne peut se contenter d'invoquer Gn 15,6, car on peut lui objecter que la situation mentionnée en Gn 15,6 fut unique. L'épisode de Gn 17 dit en effet explicitement que désormais, pour être de la descendance du patriarche et avoir accès aux bénédictions qui lui furent promises, la circoncision (qui fait devenir sujet de la Loi)⁽¹⁾ est nécessaire.

Or, pas plus en Galates 3 qu'en Romains 4, Paul n'affronte directement l'obligation formulée par Dieu en Gn 17,10-14. Les commentaires même les plus récents ne s'attardent pas sur le sujet⁽²⁾, et l'on peut d'autant plus s'en étonner que l'énigme soulève immédiatement la question de la validité de la démonstration que constitue Rm 4: comment se fait-il que l'apôtre cite Gn 17,5 (en Rm 4,17) et pas Gn 17,10-14, dont l'autorité ne saurait pourtant être remise en question? Sans doute fait-il allusion à Gn 17,10-11 en Rm 4,11, mais sans justifier sa lecture, supposant ainsi réglée la question de la circoncision. Si cette dernière ne l'est pas, l'affirmation de Rm 4,11 est gratuite, voire infondée, et le silence de l'apôtre ne confirmera-t-il pas

(*) Pour Pierre Gibert, bibliste et ami, qui d'émérite par nature l'est devenu par statut.

(1) Dans les pages qui suivent, les termes «Loi» (avec une majuscule) et «Torah» désignent la même réalité. Le terme Loi vise seulement à mettre en valeur la connotation législative, et Torah la connotation canonique.

(2) D.A. KOCH, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*. Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 69; Tübingen 1986) 222, est sans doute un de ceux qui formulent le mieux l'enjeu du rapport existant entre Gn 15 et 17, tel que le voit l'apôtre en Rm 4: «Aus der zeitlichen Vorordnung der Gerechtigkeitszusage von Gen 15,6 vor der Beschneidung Abrahams in Gen 17 folgert Paulus die Gültigkeit der Aussage von Gen 15,6 — sowie des μακαρισμός Davids (Ψ 31,1f), den er in Röm 4,7f zitiert hat — für περιτομή und ἀκροβυστία». Sur la manière dont le judaïsme d'alors lisait Gn 17, voir par ex. J.D.G. DUNN, "What Was the Issue Between Paul and 'Those of the Circumcision'?", *Paulus und das antike Judentum* (éd. M. HENGEL – U. HECKEL) (Tübingen 1991) 303-305.

le juif dans sa conviction que la vraie difficulté a été éludée? Mais si l'affirmation de Rm 4,11 est fondée, c'est qu'elle l'a été dans les versets précédents, autrement dit en 4,1-10. La présente étude entend évidemment explorer cette deuxième option et montrer que Rm 4 se prononce implicitement et néanmoins nettement sur l'injonction divine de Gn 17,10-14. Pour ce faire, on examinera de près les deux premières citations bibliques de Rm 4,1-8, à savoir Gn 15,6 et Ps 31[32],1-2⁽³⁾.

I. La *gezerah shawah* de Rm 4

1. Questions théoriques

Lorsqu'on parle des techniques à l'aide desquelles Paul interprète les Écritures, la *gezerah shawah* (désormais GS) est souvent mentionnée, car elle semble être à l'œuvre en plusieurs lettres. Si certains exégètes ne prononcent pas son nom, pour les raisons que l'on va voir, ils admettent néanmoins que l'apôtre met plusieurs fois en rapport des versets scripturaux ayant en commun un ou plusieurs mots⁽⁴⁾. Reconnaissons-le, pour qu'il y ait GS, il ne suffit pas d'expliquer l'un par l'autre les deux textes ayant des traits communs, il faut aussi que le rapprochement effectué soit pertinent et fondé, sous peine de faire dire n'importe quoi aux Écritures, dont l'interprétation deviendrait alors totalement «anarchique»⁽⁵⁾. Il importe donc de vérifier si la manière dont Paul rapproche des versets des Écritures ayant en commun un ou plusieurs mots respecte les règles de la GS et en mérite le nom.

Mais la vérification est moins aisée qu'il n'y paraît. En effet, même si la règle est attribuée à Hillel, l'utilisation du syntagme גזירה שוה pour la décrire et les contraintes que lui ont imposé les rabbins, sont de loin postérieures⁽⁶⁾. Peut-on dès lors s'appuyer sur des critères tardifs pour juger de la validité des techniques pratiquées par

⁽³⁾ Dorénavant, les psaumes auront la double numérotation, grecque et, entre parenthèses, hébraïque.

⁽⁴⁾ Outre le passage de Rm 4,3-8 présentement analysé, voir par ex. Rm 9,25-26; 9,27-29; 9,32-33; 1Co 9,9-10; Ga 3,10-14.

⁽⁵⁾ Selon la formulation même de M. CHERNICK, "Internal Restraints on *Gezerah Shawah's* Application", *JQR* 80 (1990) 256.

⁽⁶⁾ Si l'on en croit les spécialistes, dont l'avis n'est d'ailleurs pas unanime, la règle n'a reçu le nom qu'elle a aujourd'hui (גזירה שוה) qu'à la fin voire après la période des tannaïm, et les principales limitations auraient été faites à cette époque-là. Sur le sujet, voir S. ZEITLIN, "Hillel and the Hermeneutic Rules", *JQR* (1963) 161-173.

Paul et les juifs de son temps? La définition et la régulation tardives rendent-elles caduque et invalide la manière de procéder de Paul?

La technique dite *שווה מורה* a en effet reçu des définitions larges⁽⁷⁾, qui semblent correspondre davantage à ce que l'on trouve chez Paul, et des définitions restreintes, qui s'appliquent à un état beaucoup plus avancé de l'exégèse rabbinique. Pour ceux qui se contentent d'une définition large, la GS est une règle d'interprétation des Écritures consistant à mettre en parallèle ou à interpréter l'un par l'autre deux passages scripturaires ayant en commun un même mot ou un mot de même racine. Mais si cette définition décrit la technique, elle ne signale pas que les auteurs anciens l'utilisent en évitant les rapprochements triviaux ou aberrants. Si Paul avait en effet voulu interpréter ensemble tous les énoncés de la LXX où apparaît le futur moyen du verbe *ζῆν*, à savoir *ζήσεται*, il aurait pu utiliser les soixante six occurrences que lui fournissait le texte grec. Or, il ne rapproche que les énoncés d'Hab 2,4 (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται) et Lv 18,5 (αὐτὰ ἃ ποιήσας ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς)⁽⁸⁾. Et avant de juger invalide le rapprochement qu'il fait des deux textes, il importe de discerner les critères qui l'on conduit à procéder comme il l'a fait.

Mais quels sont les critères élaborés plus tardivement pour déterminer la validité de la GS? La première restriction touche les limites du corpus biblique sur lequel la règle peut être pratiquée. Les définitions restreintes qui sont données aujourd'hui signalent toutes (ou presque) que la GS relie, pour les interpréter l'un par l'autre, *deux textes de la Torah* ayant un ou plusieurs mots en commun⁽⁹⁾. Certains vont plus loin dans la limitation et ajoutent que la technique consiste à inférer *une analogie entre deux lois*, à partir de congruités verbales⁽¹⁰⁾;

(7) Ainsi, L.H. SILBERMAN, "Paul's Midrash: Reflections on Romans 4", *Faith and History*. Festschrift P.W. Meyer (éd. J.T. CARROLL – C.H. COSGROVE – E.E. JOHNSON) (Atlanta, GA 1990) 103, qui la décrit comme une «verbal analogy».

(8) Voir Ga 3,11-12.

(9) Voir la définition, limitée à deux passages de la Torah, qu'en donne M. CHERNICK dans le résumé de son article "Internal Restraints on *Gezerah Shawah*'s Application", *JQR* 80 (1990) 253-282: «Gezerah shawah, one of the thirteen classical midrashic methods, connects two pentateuchal verses by comparing similar words which appear in each, thus allowing one verse to clarify some ambiguity, usually legal, in the other» (253).

(10) Cf., par ex., M. JASTROW, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Brooklyn, NY 1967) 232, qui définit ainsi l'expression: «*Gezerah shawah, an equal or identical category, i.e. an analogy between two laws established on the basis of verbal congruities in the texts*».

en d'autres termes, une GS ne peut s'appliquer qu'aux sections législatives de la Torah. Si telle est la première restriction, la très grande majorité des rapprochements bibliques faits par Paul ne saurait mériter le nom de גזירה שוה. Je ne connais qu'un seul passage paulinien obéissant à cette contrainte, Ga 3,10b et 13b, car les deux passages mis en rapport, Dt 27,26 et 21,23, viennent tous deux de la Torah, plus exactement du Deutéronome, et ont en commun le même adjectif ἐπικατάρατος. Sur ce dernier on peut d'ailleurs discuter, car si le vocable est le même en Ga 3, tel n'est pas le cas dans la LXX⁽¹¹⁾:

– Dt 27, 26 ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ὃς οὐκ ἔμμενεί ἐν πάσιν τοῖς λόγοις τοῦ νόμου τούτου τοῦ ποιῆσαι αὐτούς

– Dt 21,23 κεκατηραμένος ὑπὸ θεοῦ πᾶς κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου.

Or, l'un des critères appliqués tardivement à la GS est que le ou les mots grâce auxquels sont rapprochés deux énoncés de la Torah doivent avoir exactement la même forme. Si l'on suit donc les critères jusqu'à présent mentionnés — sur l'étendue du corpus d'application et sur la forme du vocable servant de pont entre deux passages —, aucun des rapprochements scripturaires formulés par Paul ne peut être déclaré GS. Les rapprochements opérés par l'apôtre en perdraient-ils leur validité? Car, même si l'on doit renoncer à l'appellation גזירה שוה, l'important est bien que l'interprétation des textes bibliques faite par Paul soit fondée et justifiée.

À dire vrai, si les limitations imposées plus tard à la GS devaient invalider les modes de procéder des siècles antérieurs, l'exégèse de Paul ne serait pas la seule touchée. Bien des rapprochements scripturaires opérés avant lui devraient eux aussi tomber. Car, dès avant l'ère chrétienne, ce que l'on appellera bien plus tard GS existait déjà dans la Bible hébraïque elle-même⁽¹²⁾ et à Qumran⁽¹³⁾. La même technique a également été repérée dans les livres canoniques écrits directement en grec⁽¹⁴⁾. C'est donc toute la pratique séculaire ancienne qui pourrait être infirmée par les codifications postérieures.

⁽¹¹⁾ Une mise en série des textes n'aurait pas été possible à partir de l'hébreu, car les mots n'y sont pas de même racine: ארור en Dt 27,26, et קללה en Dt 21,23.

⁽¹²⁾ Voir M. FISHBANE, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 1985) 157, n.36; 249, n.49; 424.

⁽¹³⁾ C'est ce qu'a montré E. SLOMOVIC, "Toward an Understanding of the Exegesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls", *RQ* 7 (1969-71) 3-15. Voir encore J.A. FITZMYER, "Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11", *JBL* 86 (1967) 25-41.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Voir 4 M 18,14-19, qui consiste en une mise en série de passages bibliques ayant en commun un même vocable ou une même racine (ζωή-ζήν); cf.

En réalité, les limites imposées par les rabbins à l'usage de la GS ont été accompagnées de distinctions qu'il n'est pas inutile de rappeler, car elles procèdent moins par exclusion que par gradation⁽¹⁵⁾. Si pour interpréter une *halakah* et l'adapter à une situation déterminée, en cas de conflit avec une autre *halakah*, une גזירה שוה au sens strict est nécessaire — les passages bibliques rapprochés devant alors venir de sections législatives de la Torah et les mots utilisés pour les rapprocher être exactement les mêmes —, en revanche, pour illustrer et expliquer un passage biblique, les rabbins ont continué, suivant en cela la pratique ancienne, à utiliser des énoncés bibliques n'appartenant pas nécessairement à la Torah et dont les mots communs ne sont pas toujours identiques. Ce type de rapprochement a été nommé כאן נאמר להלן נאמר⁽¹⁶⁾ et reste considéré comme une GS d'application plus large. Les juxtapositions scripturaires faites par Paul et les traditions juives mentionnées plus haut appartiendraient à cette catégorie.

De ces dernières observations, on pourrait conclure que la manière de procéder de Paul se trouve confirmée, puisque les rabbins non seulement n'ont pas exclu la règle herméneutique להלן נאמר כאן נאמר, mais l'ont eux-mêmes pratiquée. La difficulté vient cependant de ce qu'en certaines des argumentations pauliniennes, surtout Ga 3 et Rm 4, il ne s'agit pas seulement d'illustrer ou d'expliquer un passage biblique obscur par un autre; l'enjeu est autrement plus important, car plus que d'une *halakah* particulière, qu'il faudrait adapter voire contourner, il s'agit de savoir si les chrétiens venus de la gentilité doivent ou non devenir juifs pour faire partie de la descendance d'Abraham et avoir accès aux bénédictions promises. Pour ce que Paul veut montrer, להלן נאמר כאן נאמר ne semble donc pas suffire. Bref, il nous faut examiner de plus près l'exégèse que l'apôtre fait de la LXX.

M. RASTOIN, *Tarse et Jérusalem. La double culture paulinienne à l'œuvre en Ga 3,6 – 4,7* (thèse défendue à l'université Urbaniana de Rome, 2002; en voie de publication) 171.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Pour plus ample information sur les distinctions qui suivent, voir l'état de la question fait par M. CHERNICK, "Internal Restraints on *Gezerah Shawah's* Application", *JQR* 80 (1990) 253-282.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Littéralement, «c'est dit ici, c'est dit là». Un troisième type de rapprochement a été également retenu, la גזירה שוה מופנה (le participe מופנה signifiant «free for interpretation, unnecessary for the plain sense or context», Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1188), qui n'est pas essentiel pour nos propos et ne sera donc pas ici considéré. Pour en savoir plus, voir l'article de M. CHERNICK, "Internal Restraints".

2. La GS en Rm 4,1-8 et ses caractéristiques

La manière dont l'apôtre utilise la GS n'est pas uniforme. S'il lui arrive de faire précéder les textes qu'il rapproche de formules explicites d'introduction, comme en Rm 4 – τί γὰρ ἡ γραφή λέγει v.3; καθότι καὶ Δαυὶδ λέγει v.6 –, en d'autres passages, tels Ga 3,11.12, il ne signale aucunement qu'il cite les Écritures. De même, si en certaines de ses GS les correspondances entre les deux passages scripturaires mis en série sont très fortes, comme en Rm 9,25-26; 9,27-29 et 9,32-33, en d'autres au contraire, comme Ga 3,10-14 (Gn 15,6 et Hab 2,4), les liens sont plus faibles, et parfois inexistants: ainsi, en 1 Co 9,9-10 Paul rapproche deux passages scripturaires, Dt 25,4 et un autre, que les commentateurs n'arrivent d'ailleurs pas à retrouver⁽¹⁷⁾.

À la différence des autres GS pauliniennes, celle de Rm 4 est aujourd'hui admise et mentionnée par la plupart des études et commentaires⁽¹⁸⁾. Certains exégètes avaient même depuis longtemps signalé que telle était bien la technique utilisée par l'apôtre⁽¹⁹⁾. Mais reconnaître que Paul rapproche deux textes scripturaires ne suffit pas. Il importe de se demander si le rapprochement est forcé, voire invalide, et il faut bien avouer que sur ce point, peu nombreux sont ceux qui se prononcent.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Si 6,19 semble être le passage cité, mais le mot ἀλοῶν grâce auquel ce verset a été rapproché de Dt 25,4 ne se trouve pas dans la LXX et pas davantage dans le manuscrit A hébreu.

⁽¹⁸⁾ F. SIEGERT, *Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Röm 9–11* (WUNT 34; Tübingen 1985) 243, n.11 (selon cet auteur, Rm 4, 3-8 serait le seul passage des lettres pauliniennes où l'on rencontrerait une *gezerah shawah*); KOCH, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 221-222, qui cite abondamment les articles de Jeremias mentionnés ci-dessus; R.B. HAYS, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven – London 1989) 55; SILBERMAN, "Paul's Midrash", 103; J.-N. ALETTI, *Comment Dieu est-il juste? Clefs pour interpréter l'épître aux Romains* (Paris 1991) 100-101; Id., *Israël et la Loi dans la lettre aux Romains* (Paris 1998) 91-96; J.M. SCOTT, *Adoption as Sons of God. An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT 2.R 48; Tübingen 1992) 181, n. 213, qui renvoie à la page de Siegert mentionnée ci-dessus; J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans* (AB 33; New York 1993) 376; D. MOO, *Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1996) 266.

⁽¹⁹⁾ J. JEREMIAS, "Paulus als Hillelit", *Neotestamentica et Semantica. Festschrift M. Black* (éd. E.E. ELLIS – M. WILCOX; Edinburgh 1969) 92-93; le même auteur s'était déjà exprimé sur la question dans un essai de loin antérieur, "Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen", *Studia Paulina in honorem Johannis de Zwann septuagenarii* (J.N. SEVENSTER – W.C. VAN UNNIK) (Haarlem 1953) 146-154.

Si l'on compare Gn 15,6 et Ps 31[32],1-2, les textes sollicités par Paul en Rm 4,1-8, on constate qu'à première vue leurs points d'accord ne sont pas des plus élevés. En effet, (a) la parole que ces versets ont en commun, le verbe λογίζομαι, apparaît une centaine de fois dans la LXX, et l'on ne voit pas bien pourquoi Paul a mis en parallèle Gn 15,6 avec Ps 31,6 plutôt qu'avec d'autres versets. C'est d'ailleurs pour éviter des rapprochement arbitraires que les rabbins ont par la suite ajouté une autre limitation à la GS, celle de ne rapprocher que les mots n'apparaissant que deux ou trois fois dans la Torah; (b) ce verbe n'est pas au même temps en l'un et l'autre verset: l'indicatif est aoriste en Gn 15,6 et futur en Ps 31,2⁽²⁰⁾; (c) dans le verset de la Genèse, le verbe est utilisé positivement, alors que dans le psaume il est précédé d'une négation.

Malgré tout, si λογίζομαι est souvent utilisé dans la LXX, et s'il y reçoit différents sens, il n'y a que très peu de textes où Dieu est dit tenir (ou ne pas tenir) compte de l'agir ou de l'attitude des humains à son égard:

référence	texte LXX	paraphrase
Gn 15,6 Lv 7,18	ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ οὐ λογισθήσεται αὐτῷ	foi fut comptée à Abraham pour justice sacrifice ne sera pas compté à quelqu'un l'offrant
Lv 17,4	λογισθήσεται τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ	sang sera demandé compte à un homme ayant égorgé une bête sans l'offrir en sacrifice
Nb 18,27	λογισθήσεται ὑμῖν	une part (des produits) sera comptée aux lévites
Nb 18,30	λογισθήσεται τοῖς Λευίταις	une part (des produits) sera comptée aux lévites
Ps 31 [32],2 Ps 105 [106],31	οὐ μὴ λογισθῇ κύριος ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ	Dieu ne comptera pas le péché geste de Pinhas compté pour justice = Gn 15,6
Jb 31,28	τοῦτό μοι ἄρα ἀνομία ἢ μεγίστη λογισθεῖη	iniquité comptée à Job ⁽²¹⁾
1 M 2,52	ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ	fidélité d'Abraham comptée pour justice = Gn 15,6

⁽²⁰⁾ La valeur de la GS ne dépend pas ici de la langue, car λογίζομαι traduit chaque fois l'hébreu *שׂוּחַ* au *gal*, et la séquence est la même: *לֹא שׂוּחַ*. En Gn 15,6 la forme est un *wayyiqtol*, et un *yiqtol* en Ps 31[32],2. En l'un et l'autre verset le verbe signifie «compter». SILBERMAN, "Paul's Midrash", 99-104, ayant déjà discuté et critiqué la position de Buber, selon qui le passage au grec constituait un changement décisif, qu'il stigmatisait en deux concepts, *emunah* et *pistis*, on ne reprendra pas ici le dossier, et l'on considérera simplement comme mineurs les changements existant entre l'hébreu et le grec des deux versets.

⁽²¹⁾ Des neuf passages contenant la chaîne sémantique ici retenue, ce verset de Job est le seul où le verbe λογίζομαι ne traduit pas *שׂוּחַ*.

Comme Ps 105,31 et 1 M 2,52 reprennent textuellement Gn 15,6 on peut considérer que le nombre de passages où l'on a la chaîne <Dieu + compter + à un humain> ⁽²²⁾ pourrait être ramené à sept, ce qui diminue fortement le risque d'anarchie sémantique et justifie d'autant le recours au raisonnement par analogie ou, si l'on préfère, la comparaison entre les versets sélectionnés. Mais ces neuf passages doivent être divisés en deux groupes. Il y a en effet ceux, tels Lv 7,18; 17,4; Nb 18,27.30; Ps 105,31; Jb 31,28 et 1 M 2,52, où la chaîne sémantique est la suivante: <Dieu + compter + à un humain + son agir>, où il est donc question de ce que Paul appellera la rétribution selon les oeuvres. Nb 18,27 et 30 en sont de bons échantillons et intéressent notre sujet, car Dieu y autorise les lévites à prendre leur part sur les produits du sol, une part qui leur a été ainsi comptée et leur servira de μισθός (18,31; voir Rm 4,4) en échange de tous leurs services (λειτουργία) dans la tente de la rencontre. En ces passages, c'est l'agir humain, positif (Nb 18,27.30; 1 M 2,52) ou négatif (Lv 7,18; 17,4; Jb 31,28), qui a été ou sera pris en compte par Dieu. En contraste, Ps 31[32],1-2 semble être le seul où Dieu est décrit comme ne tenant pas compte des péchés, autrement dit de l'agir humain négatif. Mais le verset du psaume ne peut-il pas lui aussi être compatible avec les sept autres représentants de la rétribution pour les œuvres? Il est cependant clair que Paul l'a lu comme une déclaration inverse, et c'est la pertinence de sa lecture qu'il faudra évidemment examiner. Gn 15,6 est le dernier passage à classer. Faut-il ou non le joindre à la chaîne de la rétribution selon les œuvres? Manifestement, 1 M 2,52 a compris le verset de cette façon, puisque la réaction divine (ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην) semble déterminée par le comportement du patriarche (ἐν πειρασμῷ εὐρέθη πιστός). Paul l'a néanmoins interprété comme le Ps 31[32],2, mettant ainsi les deux versets à part et les ôtant en quelque sorte du groupe formé par les sept autres. Sans donc préjuger encore de la valeur du rapprochement fait par l'apôtre, on doit constater que sa manière d'interpréter comme équivalents Gn 15,6 et Ps 31[32],1-2 correspond bien à la visée d'une GS, qui est de mettre en valeur le rapport unique existant entre deux passages des Écritures. Ce qui compte pour la validité de la GS, ce n'est donc pas d'abord le nombre absolu d'occurrences du ou des

⁽²²⁾ Si l'on fait exception du Ps 31,2, où Dieu est explicitement mentionné, dans les autres passages le passif est théologique (et traduit un *nifal* en Lv 7,18; 17,4; Nb 18,27.30; Ps 105,31).

vocables à partir desquels s'opère le rapprochement de deux passages bibliques, mais la série sémantique à l'intérieur de laquelle ces vocables se trouvent. Voilà pourquoi la GS élargie — autrement dit le נאמר כאן נאמר להלן — de Rm 4 ne saurait être rejetée *a priori* comme règle d'interprétation scripturaire.

Si la GS de Rm 4 respecte les règles formelles qui en assurent la validité, on peut également dire que sa fonction n'est pas différente de celle qui sera exprimée par les rabbins quelques siècles plus tard. À quels résultats mène en effet la GS effectuée par Paul en Rm 4? Dans son étude sur l'interprétation rabbinique, S. Lieberman note que le résultat d'une GS est de pouvoir «appliquer la même loi à deux situations différentes»⁽²³⁾. Or, c'est bien l'effet qu'a la GS de Rm 4, puisqu'elle permet à Paul d'appliquer le principe de la justification divine gracieuse (sans les oeuvres de la Loi) à deux situations (apparemment) totalement différentes, celle du non juif et celle du juif, comme l'a bien exprimé Koch dans l'énoncé cité en note 2. Bref, nonobstant les différences, les caractéristiques formelles de l'exégèse faite par Paul en Rm 4,1-8 appartiennent bien à celles des GS.

Ces caractéristiques ne devant pas être remises en question, le travail qui nous incombe devient ainsi plus facile à décrire. Il nous faudra examiner de plus près la lecture que Rm 4 fait du Ps 31[32],1-2, montrer ensuite que l'apôtre, qui interprète Gn 15,6 différemment des traditions juives de son temps, a besoin du Ps 31[32],1-2 pour fonder sa lecture, originale s'il en est, du verset de la Genèse.

II. L'interprétation paulinienne du Ps 31[32],1-2 et sa pertinence

Que Paul ait vu dans les premiers versets du Ps 31[32] une déclaration appuyant sa doctrine de la justification sans les œuvres de la Loi, la phrase qui introduit la citation du psaume le montre sans équivoque: «C'est ainsi que David déclare bienheureux l'homme au compte duquel Dieu porte la justice indépendamment des œuvres». Le parallélisme des v.6b et 8 souligne au demeurant que telle est bien son interprétation:

⁽²³⁾ S. LIEBERMAN, "Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture", Id., *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*. Studies in the Literary Transmission of Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century BCE – IV Century CE (New York, 1950) 47-82 (la citation vient de la note 87, p.58).

- v.6b **Paul:** τὸν μακαρισμὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ᾧ ὁ θεὸς
 λογίζεται δικαιοσύνην χωρὶς ἔργων
 – v.8 **Ps 31,2:** μακάριος ἀνὴρ οὐ οὐ μὴ
 λογίσσεται κύριος ἁμαρτιαν.

Cette exégèse s'oppose-t-elle à la doctrine de la rétribution selon les œuvres? On pourrait en effet objecter à Paul qu'en conformité à sa parole, que rapportent les versets relevés dans le tableau ci-dessus — en particulier Lv 7,18; 17,4; Nb 18,27.30 où c'est lui qui parle —, Dieu tient compte des œuvres humaines, bonnes ou mauvaises; et si c'est Dieu lui-même qui a déclaré tenir compte des œuvres, la situation décrite au Ps 31,2 doit en conséquence être interprétée en conformité avec ces déclarations. Et si, en revanche, c'est le Ps 31,2 qui décrit la pratique divine habituelle, il faut alors rendre compte des affirmations qui lui sont apparemment contraires. Pour quelles raisons Paul a-t-il donc choisi ces versets, qui annoncent proleptiquement les autres énoncés du Ps 31, à savoir la confession des iniquités, par laquelle s'exprime la confiance totale de quiconque s'en remet à la miséricorde divine?

Qui en effet confesse ses péchés? David, *sujet de la Loi*, à qui le psaume est attribué, parlerait-il de lui-même? Plusieurs déclarations du psaume peuvent effectivement renvoyer aux événements relatés en 2 S 11, quand le roi transgressa les commandements du décalogue, en commettant l'adultère avec la femme d'un de ses fidèles soldats qu'il fit ensuite tuer, transgressions très graves méritant bien le nom d'ἄνομία (עון et פשע) et qui lui furent pardonnées après qu'il les eut reconnues et confessées avec repentance. Ce disant, David ne parle pas seulement d'expérience, celle d'un pécheur pardonné, il annonce que cette situation est typique, qu'elle s'applique à quiconque reconnaît ses fautes, aussi graves soient-elles, les confesse avec humilité et implore la miséricorde divine.

Ce que David propose, c'est de ne pas cacher son péché, mais de le confesser en s'en remettant totalement à la miséricorde divine. Sa prière vaut *pour les sujets de la Loi*, puisqu'il l'est lui-même, et qu'il s'adresse manifestement à des êtres censés connaître le ὁππ divin (Ps 32 [31],10-11) par expérience ou/et par les Écritures, et donc sûrs que le Seigneur exauce quiconque lui demande du fond du cœur de pardonner. Paul n'applique pas le psaume à la situation de ceux qui sont globalement fidèles à la Loi et ne veulent pas s'en détourner, bien plutôt à ceux ayant commis des transgressions graves, et pour cela appelés ἁμαρτωλοί, ἄνομοι ou ἄσεβεις (ce dernier terme est utilisé en Rm 4,5), car c'est surtout pour eux que se pose la question de la

rétribution selon les œuvres. Que peut-on espérer, lorsqu'on ne peut plus se prévaloir des bonnes œuvres? Cela dit, reconnaissons que les déclarations du Ps 31[32] peuvent aussi s'appliquer à tous les sujets de la Loi qui n'ont pas commis d' *ἀνομία*, car ils peuvent et doivent même expérimenter la gratuité du pardon divin; David ne dit-il pas en effet: «Heureux l'homme dont ont été recouverts *les* péchés», c'est-à-dire tous les péchés, quelle que soit leur gravité? La miséricorde est toujours gratuite, même pour les fautes bénignes.

Ainsi, David proclame la miséricorde divine pour ceux qui, étant sous la Loi, confessent humblement et entièrement leurs iniquités. Ses déclarations valent-elles aussi pour ceux qui ne sont pas sujets de la Loi? Les termes utilisés ne permettent de repérer aucune exclusion: le substantif générique *άνήρ* peut s'appliquer à tous, juifs ou non; quant aux *ἀνομία*, les Écritures disent qu'elles ne sont pas seulement commises par des sujets de la Loi⁽²⁴⁾. Bref, David invite tout homme, juif ou non, à reconnaître ses fautes, à les confesser et à espérer de tout son cœur la miséricorde divine. En d'autres termes, la miséricorde divine couvre les péchés de tous ceux qui l'espèrent. Mais comment ceux qui adorent les idoles pourraient-ils confesser leurs fautes au vrai Dieu et implorer sa miséricorde? Car c'est en croyant et en s'en remettant totalement au seul vrai Dieu qu'on obtient le pardon. On entrevoit déjà comment Paul va exploiter la situation d'Abraham, lui qui s'en remet totalement au vrai Dieu, alors qu'il était incirconcis et pas encore sujet de la Loi.

Mais Dieu va-t-il jusqu'à pardonner les fautes irréparables, comme l'adultère et le meurtre? Que Paul ait voulu souligner cela, un indice le montre clairement. En effet, pour qu'il y eût GS, il suffisait à Paul d'utiliser le seul v.2 du Ps 31[32], celui où se trouve le verbe *λογίζομαι* qui permet le rapprochement avec Gn 15,6: *μακάριος άνήρ οὗ οὐ μή λογίσσεται κύριος άμαρτίαν*. Mais à lui seul cet énoncé peut donner à penser que Dieu ne laisse passer que les transgressions légères, qu'il le fait donc pour ceux qui ont peu de choses à se reprocher. En ajoutant le v.1 du psaume, en procédant donc par accumulation, l'apôtre veut montrer que le pardon divin efface tous les péchés, même les plus graves:

μακάριοι	ὧν	ἀφέθησαν	αἱ ἀνομία
και	ὧν	ἐπεκαλύφθησαν	αἱ άμαρτία
μακάριος	άνήρ οὗ	οὐ μή λογίσσεται κύριος	άμαρτίαν

⁽²⁴⁾ Voir par ex. Ps 13 [14],4; 58 [59],6; 1 M 3,20.

Le parallèle est manifestement cumulatif et synonymique: pour Paul comme pour le psalmiste, pardonner (ἀφίεναι), recouvrir (ἐπικαλύπτειν)⁽²⁵⁾ et ne pas compter (οὐ λογίζεσθαι) sont équivalents. Que d'autre part le terme ἀνομία désigne les fautes graves, celles à cause desquelles Dieu châtie et détruit, de nombreux passages bibliques en témoignent⁽²⁶⁾.

On pourrait objecter que «ce texte [du psaume] ne traite pas à proprement parler de la justification et, plus encore, que l'exclusion des œuvres, pourtant essentielle dans la perspective de Paul, n'y apparaît en aucune façon»⁽²⁷⁾. À quoi l'on répondra: (a) la difficulté vient justement de ce qu'il n'existe pas de passage de l'AT énonçant explicitement la doctrine de la justification sans les œuvres; le texte que Paul devait trouver ne pouvait dès lors avoir qu'une formulation indirecte, approximative ou approchante. (b) Il est exact que l'AT n'établit pas formellement et explicitement une stricte équivalence entre le pardon des péchés et la justification. Mais pour les fautes gravissimes, dont les auteurs sont assimilés aux impies et pécheurs, le pardon, qui rend pur et restaure dans l'amitié de Dieu, a les mêmes caractéristiques que l'obtention de la justice⁽²⁸⁾. (c) Quant aux ἀνομία — l'adultère et surtout le meurtre — dont David s'était rendu coupable, *aucune œuvre même très bonne ne pouvait les réparer*. Une multitude de bonnes actions peuvent-elles payer pour un homicide et faire revenir la personne décédée? Seul le pardon divin peut absoudre de telles fautes, en les lavant, et en faisant retrouver la justice à ceux qui l'avaient perdue. Ce n'est donc pas parce que le psaume cité par Paul ne parle pas explicitement de justification sans les œuvres qu'il n'en énonce pas l'équivalent, d'autant plus qu'il finit par une opposition entre les tourments du pécheur et la miséricorde obtenue

⁽²⁵⁾ S. LÉGASSE, *L'épître de Paul aux Romains* (Paris 2002) 295, relève aussi le parallélisme et la synonymie; on lira seulement ἐπικαλύπτειν (recouvrir) au lieu de ἀποκαλύπτειν, qui veut dire le contraire.

⁽²⁶⁾ Voir Gn 19,15; Lv 20,14; etc.

⁽²⁷⁾ LÉGASSE, *Romains*, 290. Même observation quelques pages plus loin: «Il est clair que le fait de ne pas imputer un péché en le pardonnant (v.8) n'est pas synonyme de justifier le pécheur moyennant la foi (v.9b)». Paul ferait donc trop dire au Ps 31[32],1-2. On ne saurait comprendre la façon dont procède l'apôtre si l'on n'examine pas de très près le fonctionnement et la validité de la GS.

⁽²⁸⁾ Voir par ex. Ps 50[51]; Lv 16,30; Ez 36,33; 37,23. Sur le rapport entre être pur et être juste, voir également Jb 4,17; 15,14; 25,4. Dans le NT, on trouve en Ac 13,38, qui appartient au premier discours de Paul, une assimilation explicite entre pardon des péchés et justification.

par quiconque espère en Dieu (Ps 31[32],10): qui s'en remet totalement à la miséricorde divine ne fait déjà plus partie des pécheurs. Bref, s'il faut admettre que le vocabulaire de la justification sans les œuvres est absent du Ps 31[32], il est beaucoup plus important de noter que Paul a mis les premiers versets de ce psaume en rapport avec Gn 15,6 pour confirmer sa doctrine de la justification sans les œuvres de la Loi.

Mais si le pardon divin est seul à pouvoir rendre justes les humains, cela signifie-t-il que tous les énoncés bibliques où il est dit que Dieu tient compte des œuvres, bonnes ou mauvaises, pour récompenser ou punir, sont faux? Il est évidemment exclu de donner ici une réponse exhaustive, car il faudrait reprendre synchroniquement et diachroniquement toutes les Écritures pour y lire une progressive cohérence qui dépasse des affirmations apparemment incompatibles. Il est néanmoins possible de dire succinctement que les deux types d'énoncés, ceux sur la rétribution selon les œuvres et ceux sur la miséricorde, cohabitent dans les Écritures. Dieu montre sa faveur à ceux qui le craignent et lui obéissent, mais il tient aussi compte des fautes, punit et châtie les iniquités, même celles de son peuple, lorsqu'il ne voit aucune repentance. En revanche, il se montre toujours prêt à pardonner quiconque se repent du fond du cœur de ses péchés. L'Israël post-exilique a de plus en plus compris que les punitions divines étaient faites pour le corriger, pour le pousser à la repentance, et qu'il ne survivait que grâce au pardon divin. Voilà pourquoi il a multiplié les confessions des péchés et les demandes de pardon: c'est en s'en remettant totalement à la miséricorde divine qu'il serait sauvé. En citant le Ps 31[32], Paul y a donc lu un témoin du rapport essentiel que David, et avec lui Israël, a perçu entre l'attitude de foi et le pardon, entre l'attitude de foi et la justice, et l'on ne peut dire que l'apôtre a mal interprété les affirmations scripturaires, bien au contraire.

Telles sont donc les composantes du Ps 31[32] retenues par Paul: (a) il faut confesser son péché et s'en remettre totalement, dans une attitude fondamentale de foi, à la miséricorde divine, (b) car Dieu remet les péchés, autrement dit blanchit et rend juste celui qui croit et espère en sa miséricorde. Voilà pourquoi l'apôtre a pu conclure que c'est par la foi et non par les œuvres qu'on obtient la justification. On peut ainsi dire que le Ps 31[32] confirme sa doctrine de la justification par la foi seule, sans les œuvres (de la Loi).

III. Le Ps 31 [32], 1-2 et Gn 15,6 en Rm 4

Si Paul interprète correctement le Ps 31[32] en en faisant un témoin du pardon de l'impie et/ou de la justification sans les œuvres, il importe de voir si et comment les versets choisis par l'apôtre peuvent également confirmer son interprétation de Gn 15,6.

On peut rendre compte de la présence de Gn 15, 6 en Rm 4, dans la mesure où voulant fonder sur les Écritures sa thèse de la justification par la foi seule (cf. Rm 3, 21-22.28.30), l'apôtre a trouvé en Gn 15, 6 le texte rêvé, car il appartient à la Torah, ce qui lui donne une réelle autorité. C'est également le premier verset des Écritures où les mots «foi» et «justice» apparaissent⁽²⁹⁾ et où ils sont mis en relation, une relation que Paul retient comme fondatrice, puisque la justice y est créditée par Dieu à partir de la foi. Enfin, la justice y est octroyée avant et indépendamment de la circoncision et du système de la loi mosaïque.

Malgré tout, les difficultés ne manquent pas. La première vient de la manière dont Rm 4 interprète le verset de la Genèse. Si le Ps 31[32] confirme bien que, par sa foi en la miséricorde divine, même l'impie a accès au pardon divin, en quoi pourrait-il appuyer Gn 15,6 où il n'est pas dit qu'Abraham était un impie lorsqu'il eut foi en la promesse. La tradition biblique postérieure et le judaïsme du second Temple ont d'ailleurs pensé que si Dieu avait tenu compte de la foi d'Abraham, c'est parce que ce dernier, loin d'être un impie (ἀμαρτωλός, ἄνομος ou ἁσεβής), était bien plutôt πιστός⁽³⁰⁾.

De plus, peut-on vraiment, comme le fait Rm 4, lire en Gn 15,6 une opposition nette entre foi et œuvres? Paul insiste en effet pesamment sur le fait que ce n'est pas pour une oeuvre (de la Loi)⁽³¹⁾,

⁽²⁹⁾ Dans les versions hébraïque et grecque.

⁽³⁰⁾ Ce passage est un indice que le judaïsme ancien a lu Gn 15,6 à partir de Gn 22,18. Outre 1 M 2,52 déjà présenté plus haut, voir Si 44,20-21; 2 M 1,2. Pour d'autres passages, consulter tous les commentaires récents sur Rm 4,1-8.

⁽³¹⁾ Le mot νόμος n'apparaît pas en Rm 4,3.6, mais il est probablement sous-entendu, puisque Rm 3, 28 a peine parlé de la justification «sans les oeuvres de la Loi», ce qui veut dire: sans les oeuvres *requis*es par la Loi. S. LÉGASSE a néanmoins raison de penser que l'omission du génitif νόμου est délibérée: «[D]ans ce premier stade d'argumentation (4,1-12) Abraham est allégué non pas spécialement pour montrer l'inanité d'une justification qui s'appuierait sur la pratique des commandements de la Tora, mais plus généralement pour écarter tout efficacité des 'œuvres' humaines en la matière, ce qui vaut autant pour les Gentils que pour les Juifs» (*Romains*, 290).

et donc par obligation, que le patriarche a été justifié, mais par grâce, sans obligation aucune de la part de Dieu:

v. 3 «Si en effet Abraham avait été justifié à partir des œuvres»

v. 4 «À celui qui œuvre»

v. 5 «À celui qui n'œuvre pas»

v. 6 «sans les œuvres» ⁽³²⁾.

Pourtant, si les affirmations de Rm 4,4-5 commentent Gn 15,6 en affirmant haut et fort que l'acte de foi d'Abraham n'est pas une œuvre que Dieu doit nécessairement rétribuer, une œuvre requise par un quelconque décret («fais cela et tu recevras un μισθός proportionné à ton agir»), elles ne sont pas vraiment prouvées: l'apôtre se contente d'affirmer, sans plus. Sans doute l'acte de foi est une réponse qu'on ne saurait imposer de l'extérieur: Dieu lui-même ne peut imposer à quelqu'un de le croire, de s'en remettre à sa parole, aussi véridique soit-elle. Au commentaire que Paul fait de Gn 15,6 un juif répondra qu'une foi qui ne se manifeste pas dans les œuvres est morte ⁽³³⁾. Lorsque Gn 15, 6 dit d'Abraham qu'il crut en Dieu et que cela lui fut compté comme justice, le judaïsme comprend que, loin d'être ponctuelle, la foi du patriarche fut une longue démarche de confiance et d'obéissance à Dieu, qui apprécia cette attitude constante et la compta comme justice parce qu'il s'agissait d'une foi opérante ⁽³⁴⁾. En coupant l'acte de foi inaugural de son contexte, autrement dit en le séparant des œuvres qui l'ont suivi, Rm 4 ne le déforme-t-il pas?

Si l'exégèse que Rm 4,4-5 fait de Gn 15,6 est à distance de celle du judaïsme d'alors et n'a rien d'évident, l'histoire récente de l'exégèse la rend encore plus difficile; au point qu'une étude récente en arrivait à conclure que ces versets ont été mal compris par la majorité des interprètes ⁽³⁵⁾. La lecture que Paul fait de Gn 15,6 est-elle donc

⁽³²⁾ L'argumentation se développe à l'aide d'une *reversio* qui passe du positif (*a* = œuvres; *b* = oeuvrant) au négatif (*b'* = n'oeuvrant pas; *a'* = sans œuvres). Voir ALETTI, *Israël et la Loi*, 85.

⁽³³⁾ Le lien entre foi et œuvres est aussi fortement énoncé, comme on le sait, en Jc 2,14-26, qui est sur ce point représentatif de l'interprétation que le judaïsme inter- et paratestamentaire fait de ce passage.

⁽³⁴⁾ Voir encore GnR 55s; Abbot 5, 3; MekEx 14, 15 et 14, 31; Flavius Josèphe, *Ant* 1, 8.1 et 4.

⁽³⁵⁾ M. CRANFORD, "Abraham in Romans 4: The Father of All Who Believe", *NTS* 41 (1995) 71-88, qui reproche aux commentateurs, influencés en cela par la lecture luthérienne devenue dominante, de penser que Paul insiste avant tout sur

correcte? La formulation tranchée des v.4-5 reçoit-elle une explication dans le reste de Rm 4? Autrement dit, où, dans Rm 4, est-il montré que la réponse de foi d'Abraham n'est pas une œuvre et que le fait qu'elle ait été prise en compte par Dieu reste de l'ordre de la totale gratuité?

Nous avons déjà signalé que Gn 15,6 trouve dans le Ps 31[32] une explication scripturaire, qui doit le fonder et l'éclairer. Les parallélismes sont relevés par tous les commentaires, et le schéma qui les met en valeur n'a pas besoin d'éclaircissement:

<i>Ps 32(31), 1-2 = Rm 4, 7-8</i>	<i>Gn 15, 6 = Rm 4, 3</i>
Dieu	Dieu
ne compte pas	a compté
le péché	la foi
de l'homme ⇒ bienheureux, justifié	d'Abraham ⇒ justifié

Apparemment, les points communs existant entre le patriarche croyant et le pécheur pardonné sont minimes, puisque, nous l'avons déjà noté, le pécheur dont parle David est un sujet de la Loi⁽³⁶⁾, alors qu'il n'est pas dit d'Abraham en Gn 15 qu'il est pécheur et sujet de la Loi. Comment Paul va-t-il montrer qu'Abraham croyant est dans la même situation que le pécheur s'en remettant à la miséricorde divine? Or, ce sont les versets subséquents, à savoir Rm 4,9-25, qui vont subtilement et progressivement mettre en évidence le parallélisme des situations bibliques et en tirer les conséquences sotériologiques qui s'imposent. Quels sont donc les points communs mis en valeur par Rm 4?

La première correspondance est signalée en Rm 4,9-10: la foi fut créditée à Abraham comme justice quand il était encore incirconcis. Ce que Paul met en parallèle est donc clair: l'état d'incircision de Gn 15,6 équivaut à l'être pécheur du Ps 31[32]. Que les non juifs aient été traités de pécheurs par les Écritures, le judaïsme ancien et Paul lui-même, les textes pour le confirmer ne manquent pas⁽³⁷⁾. Sans doute,

la réponse de foi d'Abraham et en fait le modèle de tout acte de foi. Selon lui, pareille exégèse laisse malheureusement de côté les circonstances de cet acte — le fait que la justification fut accordée au patriarche hors du système de la Loi, alors qu'il était incirconcis (v. 10) et avait même le statut d'impie, d' ὁσεβής (v. 5) — et le contenu de la promesse, à savoir une descendance nombreuse, avec ce que cela ouvre d'histoire sainte. Je me suis déjà expliqué avec Cranford en *Israël et la Loi*, 72-100.

⁽³⁶⁾ Mais pas seulement, comme nous l'avons déjà noté.

⁽³⁷⁾ Les expressions associant les nations (encore appelées étrangers ou incirconcis) et le péché sont nombreuses et variées. En voici quelques unes, tirées

l'état d'incirconcision physique ne suffit pas à qualifier quelqu'un de pécheur — car Rm 2,25-29 a déjà rappelé, suivant en cela les prophètes, que le non juif peut être circoncis de coeur. Mais c'est une première correspondance, qui a son corollaire, pour le juif, et que Rm 2,17-29 a déjà développé, à savoir qu'un juif pécheur — au sens fort, parce qu'ayant commis des iniquités — ne peut se prévaloir de sa circoncision physique pour échapper au juste jugement de Dieu.

Cette première correspondance, encore insuffisante, constitue néanmoins la toile de fond à partir de laquelle vont être énoncées les suivantes. La deuxième, entre Abraham et David, est qu'ils ne peuvent ni l'un ni l'autre se prévaloir de leurs bonnes œuvres. Si la chose est assurée pour le pécheur qui ne peut invoquer ses bonnes actions devant Dieu pour compenser ses crimes, elle est d'autant plus délicate à montrer à propos d'Abraham que le judaïsme du temps de Paul pensait précisément que le patriarche avait été ami de Dieu à cause de sa fidélité. Il faut donc examiner les raisons qui ont mené Paul à lire le verset autrement. Sans nous attarder sur les premiers mots de Gn 15, qui pourraient encore confirmer la lecture juive⁽³⁸⁾, retenons qu'en Gn 15,6 la justice n'est pas attribuée pour une œuvre bonne ou pour l'intégrité d'une vie, mais seulement *parce que le patriarche crut à la parole de Dieu*. On pourrait objecter que, si elle est un acte et une réponse humaine à la promesse divine, la foi du patriarche équivaut à une œuvre ou s'y substitue. Pareille lecture ignore simplement que la foi consiste à s'en remettre totalement à la parole divine, à tout attendre d'elle et d'elle seule. Présenter la foi comme œuvre signifierait qu'on l'invoquerait devant Dieu. Mais une foi qui s'invoquerait elle-même, s'appuierait en réalité sur elle-même et ne serait plus un total abandon entre les mains de Dieu; elle ne serait plus *foi*. Que l'acte de foi d'Abraham ne soit pas une œuvre, Paul l'explique encore quelques versets plus loin (Rm 4,17 qui renvoie à Gn 17,5) par l'objet même de cette foi, à savoir la promesse que Dieu lui fit d'être le père de nombreuses nations, alors qu'il était âgé et Sara stérile: il lui fut demandé de croire une chose humainement irréalisable — pour lui

de la LXX: nations et péché/pécheurs (Tb 13,8; Ps 9,18; Si 16,8-9; 1 M 1,34; 2 M 6,14; Ga 2,15); nations et iniquités/malice (Dt 9,4-5; Ps 58-59,6; Testamenta xii patriarcharum 7.5.5.2; 7.5.8.3; 8.4.1.3); incirconcis et profanation (Ez 44,7.9); étrangers et iniquité (Mal 3,19).

⁽³⁸⁾ Il s'agit de Gn 15,1, où Dieu s'adresse au patriarche en lui disant: «Ne crains pas, Abram, je serai ton bouclier; ton salaire (μισθός) sera très abondant». Pour une réponse à l'objection, voir ALETTI, *Israël et la Loi*, 95-96.

et pour son épouse. S'en remettre à une parole (divine) que tout semble rendre impossible, telle est la radicalité à laquelle la foi du patriarche fut amenée, une radicalité soulignant que Dieu seul pouvait opérer ce qu'il énonçait. Paul a donc bien raison de dire qu'Abraham le croyant est dans la même situation que David le pécheur, car la justice est accordée sans qu'ils aient eu à faire quoi que ce soit, sans que Dieu leur doive donc quoi que ce soit — la logique n'est pas celle de la Loi, où la rétribution dépend de l'observance aux commandements. L'opposition entre foi et œuvres ne s'applique pas seulement à deux situations, l'une sans la loi (pour le non Juif) et l'autre sous la loi (pour le Juif), elle touche ceux, Juifs *et* non Juifs, qui à cause de leurs péchés ou de la situation qui est la leur, ne sauraient faire valoir leurs (bonnes) œuvres.

Cette correspondance en entraîne une autre. L'attitude d'Abraham n'est pas la seule à pouvoir être qualifiée de foi, celle de David l'est tout autant, car dire que l'homme auquel Dieu pardonne les péchés est bienheureux, c'est témoigner de l'expérience du salut, proclamer qu'on la désire et qu'on l'attend. Mais le pécheur qui invoque le pardon doit s'en remettre totalement à la parole et à la miséricorde de Dieu, car il ne peut se donner à lui-même ce qu'il désire. Les situations décrites respectivement en Gn 15,6 et Ps 31[32],1-2 sont donc bien semblables et peuvent résumées voire schématisées comme suit:

Abraham en Gn 15,6
 incirconcis
 sans œuvres bonnes
 foi en la parole divine,
 espérance en sa réalisation

David en Ps 31 [32]
 pécheur
 sans œuvres bonnes
 espérant la miséricorde divine

Les correspondances indiquent bien ce que Paul est arrivé à montrer, à savoir que la situation de Gn 15,6 peut être assimilée à celle du pécheur du Ps 31[32], qui fait l'expérience de la miséricorde et donc de la libéralité divine, en ne pouvant se vanter de ses œuvres bonnes, mais en s'appuyant seulement sur la parole divine. La GS a donc bien fait son travail, celui d'interpréter Gn 15,6 à l'aide du Ps 31[32].

Mais l'objection juive relative à Gn 17 ne semble pas invalidée pour autant. En effet, si la situation d'Abraham est assimilable à celle du juif absout de ses fautes, on peut se demander si, depuis l'injonction divine de Gn 17,10-14, il n'est pas nécessaire, pour expérimenter la miséricorde du seul et vrai Dieu, de devenir sujet de la Loi, et de suivre les procédures prévues par cette même Loi pour obtenir le pardon des

péchés. Car, la Loi indique bien comment se disposer au pardon. Certes, les procédures de blanchiment n'ôtent pas à la justification sa gratuité, mais c'est en les observant que le sujet de la Loi signifie sa volonté de recevoir le pardon et d'en vivre. Paul a-t-il donc vraiment montré que les injonctions de Gn 17,10-14 ne pouvaient valoir pour les ethnico-chrétiens, qui n'avaient pas à devenir juifs pour obtenir la justification?

IV. Rm 4 et Gn 17,10-14

Si la GS de Rm 4,3.7-8 a montré les correspondances entre les deux textes scripturaires, en particulier comment Gn 15,6 peut, doit même être interprété grâce au Ps 31 [32], la réciproque est également vraie. Comme le montre le tableau des correspondances existant entre les deux passages, *le pécheur qui ne peut se prévaloir de ses œuvres pour être justifié est dans la même situation que l'incirconcis*: la circoncision ne lui sert à rien, puisque seule la miséricorde peut le guérir de son péché et lui donner d'avoir une juste relation à Dieu et aux autres — la GS de Rm 4 donne ainsi une assise biblique supplémentaire aux énoncés de Rm 2,25-29. Mais si la circoncision physique n'est d'aucune aide pour la justification du juif pécheur, c'est que, pour être obtenue, la justification n'est pas nécessairement liée à la circoncision. Comme Abraham, il faut croire pour l'obtenir, et l'on voit alors pourquoi Gn 15,6 est typique de la situation des ethnico-chrétiens, qui, n'étant pas circoncis, ont cru en la parole de l'Évangile et ont obtenu par leur seule foi en cette parole le pardon de leurs fautes et la justification. Comme l'ont souligné Cranford⁽³⁹⁾ et d'autres, ce n'est pas l'acte de foi du patriarche qui est de soi typique, mais l'ensemble des données qui constituent la situation dans laquelle il se trouvait alors (son statut d'incirconcis, l'absence d'œuvres, sa foi, etc.) et qui est celle-là même des non juifs adhérant à l'Évangile.

Les injonctions de Gn 17,10-14 ne sont pas mentionnées en Rm 4, et l'on pourrait croire que Paul n'a pas osé affronter de face la question. Nous venons cependant de voir que la GS y répond de façon indirecte mais décisive. Car, si le sujet de la Loi tombé dans le péché se retrouve dans une situation identique à celle de l'incirconcis et doit s'en remettre à la seule miséricorde divine pour retrouver la justice, c'est que la circoncision n'est pas nécessaire pour son obtention. Gn

⁽³⁹⁾ Voir l'article déjà cité, CRANFORD, "Abraham in Romans 4".

15,6 reste ainsi le modèle de l'expérience proposée aux ethno-chrétiens.

Si les injonctions de Gn 17,10-14 ne sont pas essentielles pour obtenir la justification et les bénédictions qui en découlent, on comprend que Paul ait proposé sa propre interprétation de la circoncision qu'il déclare avoir été instituée comme «comme sceau de la justice⁽⁴⁰⁾ reçue par la foi» dans l'incirconcision (Rm 4,11). Sans répéter ce que l'on trouvera développé dans tous les commentaires, rappelons seulement que la manière dont Rm 4,11-12 décrit le rôle de la circoncision vient en droite ligne de la GS. En effet, si la circoncision (l'être juif) n'est pas indispensable pour la justification, quelle fonction peut-elle avoir? En quoi peut-elle sceller une justification obtenue dans l'incirconcision? En ce qu'elle fut imposée pour que la descendance d'Abraham se constitue comme famille fondée sur une relation de foi totale et entière dans le Dieu de la promesse — la Loi étant la manière de répondre à la parole divine et de la vivre. Car c'est la promesse et la foi en la promesse qui constituaient la descendance⁽⁴¹⁾, et, en scellant ce lien de foi unissant la descendance d'Abraham à Dieu, la circoncision renvoie à cette promesse qui la précède et lui donne sens, pour rappeler que la justification fut obtenue par la foi seule et que la promesse a pris chair de la même manière. Ceux qui sont devenus juifs ont ainsi été constitués témoins d'une justification sans circoncision et d'une promesse devant s'étendre un jour aux non circoncis. Le moins qu'on puisse dire est que ce rôle attribué à la circoncision est paradoxal, mais il est logiquement inféré de la GS qui précède.

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Aujourd'hui plus qu'hier les études sur l'exégèse de Paul se multiplient. C'est implicitement reconnaître l'importance qu'eut la lecture des Écritures dans la réflexion de l'apôtre des nations. Des techniques d'exégèse, la *gezerah shawah* n'est pas la plus utilisée dans les lettres pauliniennes, mais son rôle est des plus décisifs dans les

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Comme le notent les commentaires récents (voir le dernier en date, LÉGASSE, *Romains*, 307 n. 13), s'il n'est pas sûr que l'idée de la circoncision comme sceau vienne de Paul, celle de la circoncision comme *sceau de la justice* (et non de l'alliance) l'est.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Sur le rapport entre l'acte de foi et la paternité d'Abraham en Rm 4, voir ALETTI, *Comment Dieu est-il juste?*, 98-105.

argumentations de Rm 1–4 et Ga 3–4, et sans doute n'était-il pas inutile d'examiner plus minutieusement la validité de ce type de lecture, surtout après que le rabbinisme postérieur, par ses règles drastiques, sembla disqualifier son usage élargi. Nous espérons avoir montré combien Paul a utilisé raisonnablement et surtout génialement la GS, comment elle lui a aussi permis d'écarter élégamment l'objection fondamentale qu'on n'aurait (et qu'on n'a) sans doute pas manqué de lui faire, à savoir la nécessité de la circoncision telle qu'elle est exprimée en Gn 17,10-14. Les enjeux de la GS de Rm 4 sont évidemment de taille pour la doctrine paulinienne de la justification par la foi seule⁽⁴²⁾, mais surtout pour le statut et l'histoire des croyants chrétiens, et l'on peut souhaiter que son étude, ici à peine amorcée, soit amplement commentée, maintenant que ce type de technique nous est mieux connu et ses enjeux mieux perçus.

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SUMMARY

The article is an attempt to show that, thanks to the two citations of Gn 15,6 and Ps 31[32],1-2 in Rm 4,2.7-8, Paul gives his opinion indirectly but nevertheless clearly on the injunctions of Gen 17,10-14. Those citations form a *gezerah shawah* (= GS), which goes along with the standards of the technique fixed by the rabbis later on and allows Paul to interpret the role of the circumcision in Gn 17,10-14 originally and paradoxically.

⁽⁴²⁾ Un changement méthodologique est ici en voie de se dessiner. Il y a quelques décennies on pouvait analyser les propos de Rm 4 sur la justification sans les œuvres en ne faisant pas mention de la GS, témoin la monographie, pourtant très belle de K. KERTELGE, «*Rechtfertigung*» bei Paulus. Studien zur Struktur und zum Bedeutungsgehalt des paulinischen Rechtfertigungsbegriffs (Münster 1967), qui ne fait même pas mention du Ps 31[32] (voir en particulier les pp. 185-195). Prendre en considération la GS rend plus longues mais plus fiables les analyses.

Joh 20,30f.: Ein (un)passender Schluss?
Joh 9 und 11 als primäre Verweisstellen der Schlussnotiz
des Johannesevangeliums

“Noch viele andere Zeichen hat Jesus vor den Augen seiner Jünger getan, die nicht aufgeschrieben sind in diesem Buch; diese aber sind aufgeschrieben, damit ihr glaubt, dass Jesus der Christus ist, der Sohn Gottes, und damit ihr durch den Glauben das Leben habt in seinem Namen” (Joh 20,30f.). Diese Schlussnotiz⁽¹⁾ zum Johannesevangelium wirft die Frage auf: Warum werden die σημεία so hervorgehoben? Handelt es sich um einen passenden oder einen unpassenden Schluss? Die Beschränkung auf die σημεία wird jedenfalls als erklärungsbedürftig empfunden. Die Forschung weist zu diesem Problem mehrere Erklärungsansätze auf, die ich typisierend umreiße:

(1) Literarkritisch arbeitende Exegeten⁽²⁾ vermuten in der Schlussnotiz Relikte einer traditionellen “Semeia-Quelle”. Im Blick auf das vorliegende Evangelium sei der Abschluss in der Tat unpassend. Er habe ursprünglich die “Semeia-Quelle” abgeschlossen und sei vom Evangelisten in dieser Schlussfunktion übernommen worden. Die Existenz einer Semeia-Quelle wird jedoch immer stärker in Zweifel gezogen⁽³⁾. Schwerer noch wiegt der Einwand, es müsse doch erklärt werden, warum der Evangelist eine Schlussnotiz übernehme, die gar nicht mehr passe: “Sollte Johannes gerade den Schluß seines Werkes unreflektiert gestaltet haben”⁽⁴⁾?

(¹) Die Verse weisen durch die starken anaphorischen Elemente und den Rückblick auf “dieses Buch” einen Schlusscharakter auf – unabhängig davon, ob sie (wie ich meine) das Evangelium ursprünglich tatsächlich beendeten, oder ob sich ihnen von vornherein ein 21. Kapitel anschloss. Rezeptionsorientiert formuliert: Die Leserinnen und Hörer empfinden 20,30.31 auch in der jetzt vorliegenden Fassung mit dem 21. Kapitel als ein “Schlusswort”.

(²) Unter den jüngeren Kommentaren v.a. J. BECKER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (ÖTK 4/1 und 2; Gütersloh ³1991).

(³) Zur Diskussion vgl. U. SCHNELLE, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Göttingen ³1999) 503-505; DERS., *Antidoketische Christologie im Johannesevangelium*. Eine Untersuchung zur Stellung des vierten Evangeliums in der johanneischen Schule (FRLANT 144; Göttingen 1987) 168-182.

(⁴) SCHNELLE, *Antidoketische Christologie*, 155 Anm. 341; ähnlich H. THYEN, “Die Erzählung von den bethanischen Geschwistern (Joh 11,1–12,19) als ‘Palimp-

(2) Im Blick auf die Endgestalt des Evangeliums wird daher von einigen Exegeten angenommen, dass mit den σημεία nicht nur die (z.T. explizit so genannten) Wundertaten Jesu gemeint seien, sondern das gesamte Evangelium. “[Es] kann doch kein Leser des überlieferten Evangeliums die Joh 20,30f genannten σημεία auf die Joh 2–11 erzählten Wundertaten Jesu beschränken. Wenn er in seiner Lektüre soweit gekommen ist, muß er vielmehr alles, was bis dahin geschrieben wurde (γέγραπται), in dem Term σημεία zusammengefaßt sehen”⁽⁵⁾. Hier bleibt jedoch unklar, warum der Evangelist den Begriff σημείον am Ende seines Evangeliums unvermittelt in dieser weiten Bedeutung verwendet, während er zuvor damit konkrete Wundertaten bezeichnet⁽⁶⁾. Bemerkenswert ist, dass die Schlussfunktion hier (implizit) ähnlich bestimmt wird wie bei den Vertretern einer Semeia-Quelle: Erwartet wird, dass ein Schluss in erster Linie eine Inhaltsangabe liefert. Danach wird beurteilt, ob es sich um einen passenden oder einen unpassenden Schluss handelt.

(3) Demgegenüber stellen andere Exegeten heraus, Joh 20,30.31 sei nicht als Inhaltsangabe, sondern als Zweckangabe des Evangeliums zu lesen⁽⁷⁾. Die Leserinnen und Hörer sollen glauben, “dass Je-

sest’ über synoptischen Texten”, *The Four Gospels*. Festschrift F. Neirynck (Hrsg. F. v. SEGBROECK) (Leuven 1992) 2021–2050; hier 2033 Anm. 31.

⁽⁵⁾ THYEN, “Erzählung”, 2033 Anm. 31; Hervorhebungen im Original.

⁽⁶⁾ Das Weinwunder zu Kana und die Fernheilung von Kana werden explizit als σημεία bezeichnet (2,11; 4,54). Zu den σημεία werden in der Regel des weiteren die Heilung des Kranken vom Bethesda-teich (5,1–18), das Brotwunder (6,1–15), der Seewandel (6,16–21), die Heilung des Blindgeborenen (Joh 9) und die Erweckung des Lazarus von den Toten (Joh 11) gerechnet; vgl. R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HThK 4/1; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1981) 345. Häufiger spricht der Evangelist in Summarien allgemein von σημεία (2,23; 3,2; 6,2.14 (v.l.).26; 7,31; 9,16; 11,47; 12,37; vgl. 10,41). Es deutet nichts darauf hin, dass hier etwas anderes als Wundertaten Jesu im Sinne der sieben erzählten gemeint sein sollte; vgl. R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium*, (HThK 4/2; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1985) 347. Die Ausweitung des Begriffs auf das gesamte Evangelium wirkt daher in 20,30.31 sehr unvermittelt. Es bleibt m.E. ein Erklärungsbedarf.

R.E. BROWN dehnt den σημείον-Begriff auf alle Erscheinungsgeschichten in Joh 20 aus. *The Gospel according to John* (AB29B; New York 1970) II, 1058. Auch so wird der Begriff aber wohl unzulässig ausgeweitet (SCHNELLE, *Antidoketische Christologie*, 156 Anm. 346).

⁽⁷⁾ C. WELCK, *Erzählte Zeichen*. Die Wundergeschichten des Johannesevangeliums literarisch untersucht, mit Ausblick auf Joh 21 (WUNT 2/69; Tübingen 1994) 295, gegen J. BECKER, “Das Johannesevangelium im Streit der Methoden”, *ThR* 51 (1986) 1–78, 23.

sus der Christus ist, der Sohn Gottes, und damit ihr durch den Glauben das Leben habt in seinem Namen". Den Wunderberichten würde im Rahmen dieser Zweckbestimmung eine zentrale Bedeutung zukommen. Wesentlich wird in dieser Perspektive die Verhältnisbestimmung von Zeichen und Glauben. Denn es stellt sich die Frage, warum gerade die Wunderberichte den Leser zum Glauben führen bzw. ihn in seinem Glauben bestätigen können. Gezeigt werden muss außerdem, dass der durch die Wunderberichte hervorgerufene Glaube dem "wahren" johanneischen Glauben entspricht. Um dies zu zeigen, wird dann die Bedeutung der σημεία für die Theologie des Johannesevangeliums thematisiert. Joh 20,30.31 stellt nach dieser Auffassung einen passenden Schluss für das ganze Evangelium dar. Welck entwickelt in seiner Monographie "Erzählte Zeichen" die These, dass den aufgeschriebenen Wunderberichten (γέγραπται) für die nachösterlichen Adressaten eben die Funktion zugewiesen wird, die die Wundertaten Jesu für die Zeitgenossen des Irdischen hatten: Sie offenbaren die δόξα des göttlichen Gesandten und können so Glauben hervorrufen⁽⁸⁾.

(4) Meine These lässt sich angesichts dieser grob skizzierten Forschungslage folgendermaßen einordnen und umreißen: Ich schließe mich der dritten Position und insbesondere der These von Welck an und möchte sie weiterführen. Denn hinsichtlich der Frage, wie die im Evangelium aufgeschriebenen Wunderberichte die nachösterlichen Leser zum Glauben führen können, ist noch Genaueres zu sagen: M.E. verweist die Schlussnotiz in 20,30.31 nicht mit gleicher Intensität auf alle johanneischen Wunderberichte; sondern durch die Formulierung „damit ihr glaubt/zum Glauben kommt, dass Jesus der Christus ist, der Sohn Gottes, und damit ihr durch den Glauben das Leben habt in seinem Namen" lässt sie insbesondere die Erzählungen von der Heilung des Blindgeborenen in Joh 9 (in der ein Mensch zum Glauben kommt) und von der Auferweckung des Lazarus in

⁽⁸⁾ "Der Grundsatz der 'Zeichen'-Konzeption, daß σημεία und πιστεῦειν im positiven Sinn zusammengehören, daß insbesondere Jesus σημεία tat, um die 'Menschen' zum Glauben zu führen, beherrscht in aller Selbstverständlichkeit diese zentrale, den Abfassungszweck nennende Notiz. Weil jedoch inzwischen diese auf die Zeit des Wirkens Jesu beschränkte Ermöglichung des Glaubens mit Jesu Rückkehr zum Vater ausgeschlossen ist (ἐποίησεν: Aorist!), weist der Autor 20,30b.31a seine Leser als 'Menschen' ... auf die in diesem Buch *geschriebenen* σημεία Jesu (als σημεία γεγραμμένα: Perfekt!) hin", WELCK, *Zeichen*, 310; Hervorhebungen im Original.

Joh 11 (in der ein Mensch das Leben erhält) anklingen⁽⁹⁾. Diese beiden Wundererzählungen bilden die primären Verweisstellen der Schlussnotiz, sekundär verweist sie auf alle Wunderberichte, tertiär auf das ganze Evangelium.

Ich betrachte im Folgenden das Evangelium des Johannes synchron in seiner Endgestalt, ohne damit auszuschließen, dass es in seiner Entstehung mehrere Etappen durchlaufen hat. Ich werde mich in einem ersten Schritt — gemäß der „Anweisung“ der Schlussnotiz Joh 20,30.31 — auf die Betrachtung der σημεία beschränken und versuchen zu zeigen, inwiefern die Wunderberichte in Joh 9 und 11 in besonderem Maße dem in der Schlussnotiz formulierten Zweck dienen. Im zweiten Schritt werde ich das ganze Evangelium in den Blick nehmen. Dabei soll es aber nicht um die in der Forschung viel erörterte Frage gehen, welche Rolle die σημεία insgesamt in der johanneischen Theologie spielen, sondern um die Frage, inwiefern die besondere Funktion der Wunderberichte in Joh 9 und 11 durch ihre jeweilige Gestaltung und Positionierung innerhalb des Evangeliums unterstützt wird. In dem Maß, in dem es gelingt zu zeigen, dass die Art der Einbettung der (sicher traditionell vorgebildeten) Wunderberichte in das Gesamtevangeli-um dem in 20,30.31 formulierten Zweck dient, ist die Schlussnotiz als „passend“ zu bewerten.

I. Joh 9 und 11 als primäre Verweisstellen der Schlussnotiz im Rahmen der σημεία-Berichte

Die σημεία sind — gemäß der Schlussnotiz — aufgeschrieben: (1) „damit ihr glaubt/im Glauben bleibt/zum Glauben kommt (πιστεύ[σ]ητε)⁽¹⁰⁾, (2) dass Jesus der Christus ist, der Sohn Gottes, (3)

⁽⁹⁾ Es geht mir also zunächst um die Erhebung derjenigen intratextuellen Bezüge, die die höchste Intensität aufweisen. Vgl. zur „Skalierung der Intertextualität“ M. PFISTER, „Konzepte der Intertextualität“, *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, Fallstudien* (Hrsg. U. BROICH – M. PFISTER) (Tübingen 1985) 1-30; hier: 25-30.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Das Sigma ist textkritisch unsicher. Es kann sich also entweder um einen Konjunktiv Aorist oder um einen Konjunktiv Präsens handeln. Möglich sind zwei Übersetzungen: „Damit ihr glaubt... bzw.: damit ihr im Glauben bleibt“ oder: „Damit ihr zum Glauben kommt...“. Die äußere Bezeugung lässt kaum eine sichere Entscheidung zu (vgl. *Novum Testamentum Graece* [Hrsg. Barbara und Kurt ALAND] (Stuttgart 1993) zur Stelle). M.E. sollten beide Bedeutungsmöglichkeiten nicht zu scharf voneinander abgegrenzt werden: Denn schon sehr bald musste die johanneische Gemeinde erfahren, dass Mitglieder nicht im Glauben „blieben“, also neu zu ihm kommen mussten (vgl. 1 Joh 2,19).

damit ihr durch den Glauben das Leben habt in seinem Namen" (20,31). Die Qualifizierung des Verses als Schlussnotiz lässt erwarten, dass hier Zentrales aus dem Evangelium aufgegriffen wird; die Hervorhebung der σημεία hält den Leser dazu an, zunächst die Wunderberichte auf mögliche Verweise zu prüfen.

1. *"Damit ihr glaubt/im Glauben bleibt/zum Glauben kommt (πιστεύ[σ]ητε)"*

Die σημεία stehen bei Johannes in einem engen Zusammenhang mit dem Glauben. Das zeigt sich bereits in dem ersten Wunderbericht, wenn es heißt: "So tat Jesus sein erstes Zeichen, in Kana in Galiläa, und offenbarte seine Herrlichkeit, und seine Jünger glaubten an ihn" (2,11). Dieser enge Konnex von Wunder und Glaube wird auch im letzten Wunderbericht formuliert, wenn Jesus zu Marta sagt: "Habe ich dir nicht gesagt, dass, wenn du glaubst, du die Herrlichkeit Gottes sehen wirst?" (11,40). Beide Zitate zeigen außerdem, dass die Wunder die Herrlichkeit Jesu bzw. Gottes hervortreten lassen (vgl. z.B. auch 11,4). Die Thematik des Glaubens lässt insofern alle Wunderberichte anklingen. Es gibt jedoch einen Wunderbericht, der das "Zum Glauben Kommen" eines Menschen eigens thematisiert: Gemeint ist die Erzählung von der Heilung des Blindgeborenen in Joh 9.

In 9,7 fordert Jesus den Blindgeborenen dazu auf, sich im Teich Siloah zu waschen. "Siloah" wird explizit mit ἀπεσταλμένος übersetzt. Der Gesandte aber ist Jesus selbst. Wenn der Blindgeborene sich im Teich Siloah wäscht und daraufhin sehen kann, dann ist diese Erzählung direkt transparent für die Hinwendung eines Menschen zu Jesus Christus. Diesem Menschen werden die Augen geöffnet, so dass er erkennt, dass Jesus der göttliche Gesandte ist. Der Blindgeborene ist die positive Kontrastfigur zu den Verstockten, von denen es in Joh 12,40 — in Anlehnung an Jes 6,10 — heißt: "Gott hat ihre Augen blind gemacht und ihr Herz verstockt, damit sie mit ihren Augen nicht sehen und mit ihrem Herzen nicht verstehen und sich nicht bekehren...". Das "Sehendmachen" bezieht sich wesentlich auf die Wahrnehmung und die Aneignung der vom Evangelium entworfenen "Gegenwelt"⁽¹⁾. Die Alte Kirche hat diesen Bezug deut-

⁽¹⁾ "Das Evangelium ist nicht einfache Abspiegelung der realen Welt und ihrer widerstreitenden Schulmeinungen, sondern symbolischer Entwurf einer Gegenwelt, zu deren Bewohnern es seine Leser machen möchte". H. THYEN, "Johannesevangelium" (TRE 17, Berlin – New York 1988), 200-225; hier 217.

lich erkannt und in Joh 9 vielfach eine Belehrung über die Taufe gesehen⁽¹²⁾.

Die anschließenden Dialogszenen skizzieren verschiedene Stationen einer Bekehrung⁽¹³⁾: Die Nachbarn diskutieren darüber, ob der Geheilte bzw. der Bekehrte noch derselbe ist (V. 8); die Pharisäer werfen Jesus vor, mit seiner Heilung den Sabbat gebrochen zu haben (V. 16); die Eltern distanzieren sich aus Furcht vor dem Synagogausschluss von ihrem Sohn (VV. 18-23); der Blindgeborene wird dann in der Tat ausgestoßen (V. 34).

Der Blindgeborene fällt also aus seinen sozialen Beziehungen heraus. In dieser Situation geht Jesus erneut auf ihn zu und fragt ihn nach seinem Bekenntnis (V. 35). Der Blindgeborene antwortet: "Herr, ich glaube" (V. 38).

Joh 9 thematisiert also eine "Bekehrung" und macht sie transparent für die Hinwendung eines Menschen zu Jesus Christus.

2. "Dass Jesus der Christus ist, der Sohn Gottes"

Diese Formulierung aus Joh 20,31 ist dem Leser fast wörtlich schon in 11,27, also im Kontext der Erzählung von der Auferweckung des Lazarus, begegnet. Marta bekennt dort "Herr, ich glaube, dass du der Christus bist, der Sohn Gottes, der in die Welt gekommen ist". Diese enge Parallelität in der Formulierung lässt vermuten, dass die Schlussnotiz auch auf die letzte Wundererzählung in Joh 11 in besonderem Maße anspielen will.

Bei der Auferweckung des Lazarus handelt es sich auf der Ebene der erzählten Welt um einen episodischen Rückruf ins Leben. Die Hohepriester beschließen, ihn wiederum zu töten (12,10). Er ist also der Macht des Todes nicht endgültig entronnen. Hintergründig handelt es sich bei dieser episodischen Auferweckung allerdings um ein "Zeichen der endzeitlichen Totenauf resurrection" (14). Denn: "Hier ist

In dieser Diktion spiegelt sich die Terminologie P. RICOEURS: "Ein Text ist zu interpretieren als ein *Entwurf von Welt*, die ich bewohnen kann, um eine meiner wesenhaften Möglichkeiten darein zu entwerfen", "Philosophische und theologische Hermeneutik", DERS. – E. JÜNGEL, *Metapher*. Zur Hermeneutik religiöser Sprache (München 1974) 32.

(12) Vgl. die Belege bei SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium*, II, 326 Anm. 1.

(13) Vgl. zur "Bekehrung" M. WOLTER – W.C. FREND, "Bekehrung I" (*TRE* 5; Berlin – New York 1980) 440-457.

(14) K. WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium* (ThKNT 4/2; Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln 2000) 27.

an einem einzelnen Toten ins Bild gesetzt, was in 5,28f. von der endzeitlichen Auferweckung der Toten gesagt wurde”⁽¹⁵⁾. Die Figur des Lazarus hält damit dem johanneischen Leser die Gewissheit der endzeitlichen Totenauf resurrection tröstlich vor Augen. Hier wird eindrucksvoll ins Bild gesetzt, wie Jesus als Lebensspender wirkt.

Welche Funktion hat in diesem Kontext das Bekenntnis der Marta? Erstaunlich ist, dass sie auf die Aufforderung Jesu, den Stein vom Grab wegzurollen, mit dem Hinweis reagiert, dass Lazarus schon vier Tage tot sei und stinke. Zeigt sich hier nicht wiederum ihr Unglaube⁽¹⁶⁾? Ist das Bekenntnis in 11,27 dann überhaupt Ausdruck “wahren” Glaubens? Da der Wortlaut stark an den Buchschluss in 20,31 erinnert, ist diese Frage m.E. zu bejahen⁽¹⁷⁾. Wie verhält sich dazu aber die Reaktion Martas in V. 39? M.E. ist der Ausgleich zwischen dem vollgültigen Bekenntnis in V. 27 und der Reaktion in V. 39 in der Richtung zu suchen⁽¹⁸⁾, dass es in 11,27 um die Frage der eschatologischen Auferstehung geht, in V. 39 hingegen ist die episodische, wunderhafte Auferweckung des Lazarus im Blick. Hier ist neuerliches Erstaunen angebracht, denn es dürfte kaum zur Erfahrung der johanneischen Christen gehören, dass Tote für eine Zeit lang wieder lebendig werden, um dann erneut zu sterben. An dieser Stelle wird also darauf hingewiesen, dass es sich bei der Auferweckung des Lazarus vordergründig um ein episodisches Ereignis handelt, das zum Zeichen eines eschatologischen Ereignisses wird. Der Text spielt mit der schillernden Bedeutung der exemplarischen Auferweckung und gibt hier der Erfahrung der johanneischen Christen Raum, dass Tote eben nicht wieder zeitweilig lebendig werden. Oder mit anderen Worten: Er spielt mit dem Wechsel von Transparenz und fehlender Transparenz der erzählten Welt für die Situation der historischen Leser⁽¹⁹⁾. Die episodische Totenauf resurrection eines Menschen ist nicht trans-

⁽¹⁵⁾ WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium*, II, 35; ähnlich J. FREY, *Die johanneische Eschatologie* III (WUNT 117; Tübingen 2000) 416.

⁽¹⁶⁾ R. BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (KEK; Göttingen 1941, 21986) 310.311.

⁽¹⁷⁾ “So wie Martha V 27 antwortet, soll für [den] E[vangelisten] jeder Christ bekennd reagieren”. BECKER, *Johannes*, 426; anders F. Moloney, “The Faith of Martha and Mary. A Narrative Approach to John 11,17-40”, *Bib* 75 (1994) 471-493, der auf 20,31 gar nicht eingeht.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Ähnlich, wenn auch nicht so zugespitzt, WENGST, *Johannesevangelium*, II, 33.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Eine ähnliche Differenzierung zwischen der vor- und der nachösterlichen Situation nimmt K. BERGER, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg 1984) 86, vor.

parent; das Bekenntnis der Marta aus 11,27 ist dagegen hochgradig transparent für die johanneischen Christen, wie 20,31 zeigt. Martas Erstaunen über eine solche episodische Totenaufweckung fängt die fehlende Transparenz dieses Ereignisses ein.

Die "Differenz zwischen der vorösterlichen und der nachösterlichen Situation"⁽²⁰⁾, die in der Schlussnotiz in der Form aufscheint, dass zwischen den Wundertaten Jesu und den im Evangelium aufgeschriebenen Wunderberichten differenziert wird⁽²¹⁾, prägt also bereits die Reaktionen der Marta (und Maria) in Joh 11. Dabei ist bemerkenswert, dass der nachösterlichen Gemeinde die "bessere" Situation zugeschrieben wird: Sie kommt in den Genuss nicht (nur) episodischer Totenaufweckungen, sondern des ewigen Lebens.

3. *"Damit ihr durch den Glauben das Leben habt in seinem Namen"*

Wie bereits gesehen begegnet die Thematik des (ewigen) Lebens innerhalb der σημεία-Berichte am prominentesten in der Erzählung von der Auferweckung des Lazarus in Joh 11⁽²²⁾. Das dritte Element der Schlussnotiz koppelt nun explizit das Leben an den Glauben und an den Namen Jesu Christi. Diese christologische Verankerung des ewigen Lebens wird ebenfalls in dem Dialog zwischen Jesus und Marta in 11,21-27 thematisiert, dessen Abschluss das bereits besprochene Bekenntnis in 11,27 bildet.

In V. 24 äußert Marta die Überzeugung: "Ich weiß, dass er auferstehen wird bei der Auferstehung am letzten Tag". Jesus entgegnet darauf: "Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben. Jeder, der an mich glaubt, wird leben, auch wenn er stirbt; und jeder, der an mich glaubt, stirbt gewiss nicht in Ewigkeit". (11,25.26) Widerspricht Jesus damit dem Bekenntnis der Marta⁽²³⁾, korrigiert oder ergänzt⁽²⁴⁾ er es?

⁽²⁰⁾ BERGER, *Formgeschichte*, 86.

⁽²¹⁾ S.o. Anm. 8.

⁽²²⁾ Die Thematik des ewigen Lebens klingt bereits in der Rede zum Brotwunder an, wenn Jesus von sich sagt: "Ich bin das Brot des Lebens. Wer zu mir kommt, den wird nicht hungern, und wer an mich glaubt, den wird nie mehr dürsten" (6,35). Prominenter und unmittelbarer in einer σημεία-Erzählung verankert ist das Thema des ewigen Lebens jedoch in Joh 11. Hier finden wir auch das Bekenntnis der Marta (11,27), das z.T. wörtlich in der Schlussnotiz aufgenommen wird.

⁽²³⁾ So meist literarkritisch arbeitende Exegeten, z.B. BECKER, *Johannes*, 404-425.

⁽²⁴⁾ So meist synchron arbeitende Exegeten, z.B. jüngst WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium*, II, 21-28.

Bei dieser Frage ist zu beachten, dass die anschließende Wundererzählung ausführlich geschildert wird und so ihr eigenes Gewicht hat. Grundlegend ist dabei die Aussage, dass die Wirklichkeit des physischen Todes angesichts der präsentischen Zusage eschatologischen Lebens, wie sie in 5,24 formuliert ist, nicht wesenlos wird. Das zeigt gerade die Lazarusperikope besonders deutlich. Denn: "Dort wird — in der 'erzählten Welt' wie auch in dem Verheißungswort Joh 11,25b ... — mit der Möglichkeit des leiblichen Todes auch der 'Freunde' Jesu gerechnet, und die leibhaftig-konkrete Schilderung der Auferweckung des Lazarus zeigt, daß sich das Johannesevangelium in dem ... 'spiritualistischen' Sinne nicht angemessen interpretieren läßt" ⁽²⁵⁾. Das heißt: "Die Erwartung der künftigen Auferstehung wird nicht vergleichgültigt oder beiseite geschoben, sondern bestätigt" ⁽²⁶⁾. Für das Verhältnis des Bekenntnisses der Marta zum Ich-bin-Wort Jesu bedeutet das: Die futurische Eschatologie der Marta mit ihrer Erwartung einer zukünftigen Auferstehung wird nicht zurückgewiesen, sondern implizit durch das präsentische Ich-bin-Wort ergänzt. Auf der Ebene der erzählten Welt schwingt hier außerdem mit, dass Jesus sich ja gerade dazu anschickt, Lazarus aufzuerwecken. Von theologischem Gewicht ist aber v.a. die Korrektur der insuffizienten Christologie, die das Bekenntnis der Marta aufweist: *Jesus Christus* ist die Auferstehung und das Leben. Eben das stellt 20,31c nochmals heraus.

Ich fasse zusammen: Die Schlussnotiz in Joh 20,30.31 hebt die Wunderberichte des Evangeliums besonders hervor. Die Formulierung der Zweckbestimmung in V. 31 lässt darüber hinaus erkennen, dass nicht alle Wunderberichte gleich intensiv avisiert sind, sondern dass insbesondere die Erzählung von der Heilung des Blindgeborenen in Joh 9 und die Erzählung von der Auferweckung des Lazarus in Joh 11 anklingen sollen ⁽²⁷⁾.

Dieses Zwischenergebnis wird dadurch gestützt, dass Joh 9 und Joh 11 explizit miteinander verbunden werden und Parallelen aufweisen. Die Erzählung von der Auferweckung des Lazarus weist in

⁽²⁵⁾ FREY, *Eschatologie* III, 400.

⁽²⁶⁾ WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium*, II, 27.

⁽²⁷⁾ Von besonderer Bedeutung ist bei den Verweisen der Schlussnotiz auf Joh 9 und 11 das Kriterium der Selektivität: "Mit dem pointiert ausgewählten Detail wird der Gesamtkontext abgerufen, dem es entstammt, mit dem knappen Zitat wird der ganze Prätext in die neue Sinnkonstitution einbezogen". PFISTER, "Konzepte der Intertextualität", 29.

11,37 explizit auf die Erzählung von der Heilung des Blindgeborenen zurück. Zwischen beiden Wunderberichten bestehen auffällige Parallelen: In 11,4 sagt Jesus, dass die Krankheit des Lazarus der Verherrlichung Gottes diene. Ebenso bestimmt er in 9,3 von vornherein die Funktion des folgenden Zeichens: Die Werke Gottes sollen an ihm offenbar werden. In 9,4.5 und 11,9.10 begegnet dieselbe Metaphorik von Licht und Nacht. In 9,35 und in 11,26.27 fordert Jesus jeweils ein Bekenntnis, das der Blindgeborene bzw. Marta darauf hin ablegen. Joh 9 und 11 heben sich von den übrigen σημεία des Johannesevangeliums deutlich ab: Sie sind am intensivsten dramatisch ausgestaltet⁽²⁸⁾ und thematisieren soziale Beziehungen.

Bisher ist deutlich geworden, dass die Schlussnotiz besonders intensiv auf zwei Wunderberichte zurückverweist, die davon erzählen, wie ein Mensch zum Glauben kommt bzw. das Leben erhält. Wenn Joh 20,30.31 sich außerdem direkt an die Leser wendet ("ihr"), dann steht zu vermuten, dass sich die Adressaten durch diese beiden Wunderberichte besonders angesprochen fühlen.

Die johanneische Jesusgeschichte ist so geschrieben, dass die johanneische Gemeinde sich in ihr wiederfinden kann: Das Evangelium ist als "two-level-drama" gestaltet⁽²⁹⁾. Die erzählte Welt der Geschichte Jesu wird von der Welt des Erzählers bzw. der ihn bestimmenden, bereits zurückliegenden Erfahrungen seiner Gemeinde überlagert⁽³⁰⁾. M.a.W.: Die Jesusgeschichte ist für die Situation des johanneischen Lesers transparent⁽³¹⁾. Joh 9 und Joh 11 weisen nun einen besonders hohen Grad an Transparenz auf:

In 9,22 wird die Reaktion der Eltern auf die Anfrage der Juden mit den Worten kommentiert: "Das sagten seine Eltern, weil sie sich vor den Juden fürchteten; denn die Juden hatten schon beschlossen, jeden, der ihn als den Christus bekenne, aus der Synagoge auszustoßen". Diese Rede vom Synagogenausschluss in 9,22 reflektiert nachösterliche Verhältnisse. Hier wird eine für die johanneische Ge-

⁽²⁸⁾ Vgl. J.L. MARTYN, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (New York 1968; Nashville ²1979) 26-36.

⁽²⁹⁾ MARTYN, *History*, 142.

⁽³⁰⁾ U. LUZ, "Geschichte. IV. Neues Testament" (*TRE* 12, Berlin – New York 1984) 595-604; hier: 598.

⁽³¹⁾ Vgl. U. LUZ, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (EKK I; Neukirchen-Vluyn Bd. 1: 1985 ⁴1997, Bd. 2: 1990 ²1996) I, 58. Zum Begriff der Transparenz führt U. LUZ aus: "Dem Begriff der 'Transparenz' entspricht derjenige der 'inkluisiven Geschichte' Jesu, die eigene Erfahrung mit ihr einschließt und darum als 'meine' bzw. 'unsere' Geschichte entfaltet werden kann" (*Matthäus*, II, 66).

meinde prägende Erfahrung auf den Begriff gebracht⁽³²⁾. Von ihr ist an dieser Stelle erstmals die Rede (vgl. außerdem 12,42 und 16,2). Auffällig ist dabei, dass das an allen Stellen gebrauchte Wort ἀποσυνάγωγος im Neuen Testament nur hier begegnet. Es ist außerchristlich nicht belegt und christlich nur an vom Johannesevangelium abhängigen Stellen. Das ἀποσυνάγωγος γένηται bezeichnet daher wohl die spezifisch johanneische Deutung⁽³³⁾ eines historischen Ereignisses, das für uns nicht mehr mit letzter Sicherheit greifbar ist⁽³⁴⁾. Der Begriff ruft ein fundamentales "Grunddatum" der Geschichte der johanneischen Gemeinde in Erinnerung.

Marta und auch Maria klagen: "Herr, wärest du hier gewesen, dann wäre mein Bruder nicht gestorben" (11,21.32). In dieser gleichförmigen Klage der Schwestern scheint jene Anfechtung angesichts der leiblichen Abwesenheit Jesu und der erfahrenen Macht des Todes zur Sprache zu kommen, die auch im Hintergrund der Abschiedsreden steht (14,27; 16,6). Die Klage spiegelt wohl eine Haltung, die bei den johanneischen Christen verbreitet war⁽³⁵⁾.

Insofern ist anzunehmen, dass sich die Leserinnen und Hörer des Evangeliums durch diese beiden Wunderberichte direkt angesprochen fühlten. Joh 9 und 11 haben also im Vergleich zu den anderen Wunderberichten in besonderem Maße die Funktion, die Leser des Johannesevangeliums zum Glauben zu führen, damit sie das ewige Leben haben.

II. Joh 9 und 11 als primäre Verweisstellen der Schlussnotiz im Rahmen des Johannesevangeliums

Wenn Joh 20,30.31 zu Recht als passender Schluss des ganzen Evangeliums gelten soll, dann müsste sich zeigen lassen, dass die

⁽³²⁾ K. WENGST, *Bedrängte Gemeinde und verherrlichter Christus* (München 1981 '1992) 77. In welchem zeitlichen Verhältnis Synagogausschluss und Endfassung des Evangeliums stehen, kann hier offen bleiben.

⁽³³⁾ WENGST, *Gemeinde*, 89.

⁽³⁴⁾ Ein direkter Bezug des johanneischen ἀποσυνάγωγος auf die Einführung des sogenannten "Ketzersegens" in die *Birkat-ha-Minim* scheint mir nicht möglich (gegen J.L. MARTYN, *History*, bes. 38-62). "Denn ein Ausschluss ist ein aktives Vorgehen gegen eine Minderheit". G. THEIBEN, *Das Neue Testament* (München 2002) 97,98.

⁽³⁵⁾ Vgl. K. SCHOLTISSEK, "Abschied und neue Gegenwart. Exegetische und theologische Reflexionen zur johanneischen Abschiedsrede 13,31-17,26", *EthL* 75 (1999) 332-358.

besondere Funktion von Joh 9 und 11 durch ihre Gestaltung und ihre Stellung im Evangelium unterstützt wird. Das lässt sich m.E. an drei Punkten nachweisen: (1) *inhaltlich* klingt in den beiden Wunderberichten das gesamte Wirken Jesu von Johannes dem Täufer bis zu Passion und Auferweckung an. Die Schlussnotiz liefert also indirekt durchaus eine Inhaltsangabe; (2) *funktional* wird der Grad an Transparenz, den Joh 9 und 11 aufweisen, durch die Zwischenschaltung der Hirtenrede weiter gesteigert; (3) *kompositorisch* kommt den beiden Wunderberichten eine zentrale Stellung innerhalb des Evangeliums zu. Die Schlussnotiz verweist also auf Texte, die für das Evangelium insgesamt zentral sind.

1. *Inhaltlich*

Joh 9 und 11 weisen einerseits zurück auf die Anfänge der Wirksamkeit Jesu, andererseits greifen sie vor auf die Erzählung von seiner Passion und Auferstehung:

“Indem der Evangelist am Ende von Kap. 10 Jesus an den Ort seines ersten Auftretens zurückkehren und ihn so nun von dem einen Betanien (1,28) zu dem anderen Betanien (11,1) kommen lässt, umgreift er dessen ganzes bisheriges Wirken und lässt es in der Auferweckung des Lazarus kulminieren”⁽³⁶⁾. Auffällig ist außerdem, dass der Erzählung von der Auferweckung in 10,40-42 eine Notiz über Johannes den Täufer vorgeschaltet ist. Die Anfänge der Wirksamkeit Jesu (vgl. 1,35-40) — gleichzeitig auch seine Überlegenheit gegenüber Johannes dem Täufer⁽³⁷⁾ — kommen so noch deutlicher in den Blick.

Neben Rückverweisen auf den Beginn des Evangeliums finden sich in Joh 9 und 11 auch Vorverweise auf sein Ende: In 11,53 wird der endgültige Beschluss zur Tötung Jesu gefällt. Insgesamt wird in der Abfolge von Blindenheilung und Auferweckung des Lazarus — ohne dass man hier zu stark systematisieren dürfte — die Abfolge von Prozess und Auferweckung Jesu vorweggenommen. Ich nenne hier nur einzelne Parallelen: Joh 9,8-34 ist eine Prozess Erzählung, die wie Joh 18-19 szenisch und dialogisch strukturiert ist. Wenn der Geheilte sich öffentlich und ohne Furcht zu seiner Identität bekennt,

⁽³⁶⁾ WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium*, II, 11.

⁽³⁷⁾ Zu Johannes dem Täufer heißt es: “Johannes hat kein Zeichen getan”. (10,41) Der Vers stellt damit die Überlegenheit Jesu heraus, denn dieser hat ja gerade den Blindgeborenen geheilt und schickt sich nun dazu an, Lazarus aufzuwecken.

obwohl ihm das ein Verhör einbringt (9,9), so steht dieses Bekenntnis in deutlichem Kontrast zur Verleugnung des Petrus (18,17.25). Die Juden erweisen sich sowohl in Joh 9,39 als auch in 19,5.6 als blind. Sie pochen jeweils auf das Gesetz (9,16; 19,7). Der hintergründige Rollentausch⁽³⁸⁾ zwischen Jesus und Pilatus in Joh 18; 19 erinnert an den Rollentausch zwischen dem Blindgeborenen und den Pharisäern in Joh 9. Die Verherrlichung, die Jesus in 11,4 anspricht, erinnert an seine eigene Verherrlichung im Horizont seiner "Stunde" (12,16.23.28; 13,31; 17,1.4.5). Die Aufforderung Jesu aus 11,44 ("Löst ihm die Binden, und lasst ihn gehen!") klingt in 18,8 wieder an, wenn Jesus zu den Knechten und Soldaten sagt: "Sucht ihr mich, dann lasst diese gehen". Enge terminologische Parallelen bestehen zur Ostererzählung: Die Beschaffenheit des Grabes ist dieselbe (Es handelt sich jeweils um ein Höhlengrab, vor dem ein Stein liegt. 11,38; 20,1). Auffällig parallel ist auch die Nennung der Binden und Schweißtücher (11,44; 20,7; vgl. 19,40).

Das heißt: In Joh 9 und 11 klingt die gesamte Erzählung von der Wirksamkeit Johannes des Täufers bis zur Auferweckung Jesu an. Insofern kann die Schlussnotiz durchaus zu Recht beanspruchen, über Joh 9–11 auf das gesamte Evangelium zurückzuverweisen. Die Einbeziehung des gesamten Evangeliums kann also nicht damit begründet werden, dass die Bedeutung des σημεία-Begriffs sehr weit zu fassen ist (gegen Thyen), sondern damit, dass die zwei Wunderberichte, auf die die Schlussnotiz primär verweist, indirekt die gesamte johanneische Jesusgeschichte anklingen lassen.

2. Funktional

Die Hirtenrede ist stark ekklesiologisch geprägt. Diese ekklesiologische Ausrichtung bedeutet einen besonders hohen Grad an Transparenz, denn die Rede will ja anhand der Metaphorik von Hirt und Schafen Verhältnisse in der johanneischen Gemeinde beleuchten⁽³⁹⁾. Durch ihre Stellung zwischen Joh 9 und 11 ergibt sich nun

⁽³⁸⁾ Vgl. D.F. GNIESMER, *In den Prozeß verwickelt*. Erzähltextanalytische Erwägungen zur Erzählung vom Prozeß Jesu vor Pilatus (Joh 18,28–19,16a.b) (EHS 23.688; Frankfurt/M. 2000), vgl. zu Kap. 9 besonders 382–383; K. SCHOLTISSEK, "Ironie und Rollenwechsel im Johannesevangelium", *ZNW* 89 (1998) 235–255.

⁽³⁹⁾ Zur Ekklesiologie im Johannesevangelium vgl. J. ROLOFF, "Die Gemeinschaft der Freunde Jesu: Die johanneischen Schriften", DERS., *Die Kirche im Neuen Testament* (GNT 10; Göttingen 1993), 290–309; mit einem problem-

die grobe Abfolge: Ein Mensch kommt zum (johanneischen) Glauben (Joh 9); er tritt (durch die Tür, 10,7) in die johanneische Gemeinde ein und ist nun ein Schaf in der Herde, dessen Hirt der johanneische Christus ist (10,1-21); er wird schließlich sterben und auferweckt werden (Joh 11). Joh 9–11 skizzieren damit wichtige Stationen aus dem Leben eines johanneischen Christen: Die "Lebensgeschichte" ist – etwas holzschnittartig formuliert – in drei "Etappen" gegliedert: Die erste "Etappe" beschreibt die Entwicklung von der Geburt⁽⁴⁰⁾ bis zur Bekehrung (9,38), die zweite den christologischen Lernprozess⁽⁴¹⁾ im Kontext der Gemeinde, der aus einem bekehrten einen "wahrhaft" johanneischen Christen macht (vgl. 9,38; 11,27), und die dritte "Etappe" — die mit der zweiten verzahnt ist — thematisiert den johanneischen Christen im Spannungsfeld von befristetem physischem und ewigem eschatologischem Leben. Die Bestimmung der kommunikativen Funktion des Buches in 20,30.31 nimmt bezeichnender Weise genau diese drei Aspekte wieder auf: das (Kommen zum) Glauben, das vollgültige "johanneische" Bekenntnis aus 11,27 und die Gabe des ewigen Lebens.

3. Kompositorisch

Die beiden Wunderberichte in Joh 9 und Joh 11 sind am breitesten dramatisch ausgestaltet. Jesu Wirken als machtvoller Wundertäter gipfelt in der Auferweckung eines Menschen, der schon vier Tage tot war.

Die Wunderberichte stehen an zentraler Stelle in der Mitte des Evangeliums: Die Auferweckung des Lazarus findet ihr vorläufiges

orientierten Forschungsüberblick: B. KOWALSKI, *Die Hirtenrede (Joh 10,1-18) im Kontext des Johannesevangeliums* (SBB 31; Stuttgart 1996) 236-282.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Bereits der erste Vers der Wundererzählung stellt heraus, dass es sich bei dem Kranken um einen *Blindgeborenen* handelt (ἐκ γενετῆς). Dadurch wird zunächst die Dauer der Krankheit hervorgehoben. Im Vergleich zu dem Gelähmten von Betesda (5,5), wo betont wird, dass der Gelähmte seit 38 Jahren krank war, fällt beim Blindgeborenen außerdem auf, dass hier der Gedanke der Geburt explizit eingebracht wird.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Die Thematik der johanneischen Christologie, insbesondere die Anreicherung des Bekenntnisses zu Jesus Christus, das einen Christen zu einem *johanneischen* Christen macht, durchzieht die Kapitel 9–11: Das inhaltlich dürre Bekenntnis des Blindgeborenen in 9,38 wird in Joh 10 und 11 christologisch angereichert und gipfelt im vorbildlichen Bekenntnis der Marta in 11,27 (vgl. 20,31).

“Ergebnis” in dem Beschluss des Hohen Rates, Jesus zu töten (11,53). Das öffentliche Wirken Jesu kommt damit zu einem Abschluss. Das Schicksal Jesu ist nunmehr “besiegelt”. Alles läuft auf die Passion zu.

Die zwischen Joh 9 und Joh 11 eingeschaltete Tempelweihrede unterstützt den Charakter der Passage als eines “Gipfelpunktes” innerhalb des Evangeliums: Sie bringt in 10,30 das christologische Spitzenbekenntnis des Buches: “Ich und der Vater sind eins”. Mlakuzhyil bestimmt in seiner Monographie⁽⁴²⁾ Jesu Auftreten in der Halle Salomons beim Tempelweihfest als die Peripetie des Evangeliums. Selbst wenn man diesem Urteil nicht zustimmen sollte, so gilt doch: Mit der Tempelweihrede ist ein christologischer “Gipfelpunkt” erreicht. Er fügt sich um so besser in den christologischen “Lernprozess”, als es wohl die “hohe Christologie” war, die zum Ausschluss der johanneischen Gemeinde aus dem Synagogenverband führte. Insofern ist auch diese Passage hochgradig transparent: So wie Jesus aufgrund seines Selbstbekenntnisses angefeindet wurde, wird bzw. wurde die johanneische Gemeinde aufgrund ihres Bekenntnisses zu Jesus als dem göttlichen Gesandten angefeindet⁽⁴³⁾.

Diese Auslegung wird zusätzlich dadurch gestützt, dass sie die Zwischenschaltung der drei “Blöcke” in Joh 10: der Hirtenrede in 10,1-21, der Tempelweihrede in 10,22-39 und der Zwischennotiz zu Johannes dem Täufer in 10,40-42, plausibel machen kann.

Denn diese Zwischenschaltung ist aus mehreren Gründen erklärungsbedürftig. Wir haben schon gesehen, dass beide Wunderberichte explizit miteinander verbunden werden (11,37) und mehrere Parallelen aufweisen (s.o.). Ansonsten werden im Johannesevangelium immer zwei Wunderberichte zu einem Doppelzeichen zusammengestellt: In Kap. 6 folgt unmittelbar auf die Speisung der 5000 (VV. 1-15) der Seewandel (VV. 16-21). In Kapitel 4 und 5 wird erst von der Heilung des Sohnes eines königlichen Beamten erzählt (4,43-54), dann von der Heilung eines Gelähmten am Teich Betesda (5,1-18). In Kap. 2 folgt auf die Perikope der Hochzeit zu Kana (VV. 1-12) die Tempelreinigung (VV. 13-22), die unter dem Aspekt einer Zeichenhandlung thematisiert wird⁽⁴⁴⁾. Joh 9 und 11 dienen —

⁽⁴²⁾ *The Christocentric Structure of the Fourth Gospel* (AnBib 117; Rom 1987) 17-85.

⁽⁴³⁾ THEIBEN, *Das Neue Testament*, 96-107.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ “Das von Jesus im Anschluß an die Tempelreinigung und das Verlangen der Juden [2,18] geäußerte Rätselwort (vom Niederreißen und Aufbauen

wenn unsere Interpretation zutrifft — in besonderem Maße derselben Funktion, eben der Funktion, die in 20,30.31 nochmals explizit gebündelt formuliert wird.

Die Art der Zwischenschaltung der drei Blöcke in Joh 10 lässt allerdings erkennen, dass Joh 9 und 11 nicht einfach auseinandergerissen werden, sondern dass sie als *Rahmen* für Joh 10 fungieren sollen. Deutlich erkennbar ist jedenfalls ein "Wille" zur Kohärenz:

Explizit greift die Hirtenrede in 10,21 auf die Blindenheilung zurück. Die Tempelweihrede greift auf die Metaphorik der Hirtenrede zurück. Inhaltlich bereiten die Hirten- und die Tempelweihrede thematische Aspekte der Heilung des Blindgeborenen und der Auferweckung des Lazarus vor und nach:

Die Thematik der Gefährdung der Christen, die in Joh 9 im Synagogausschluss kulminiert, klingt in der Hirtenrede in den allegorischen Gestalten des Diebes, des Räubers und des Wolfes wieder an. Die Tempelweihrede thematisiert die Gefährdung des johanneischen Christus, der – wie seine Gemeinde – aufgrund seines Bekenntnisses Anfeindungen seitens der jüdischen Umwelt erleidet. In Joh 11 führt die Auferweckung des Lazarus zum Beschluss des Hohen Rates, Jesus zu töten (11,53; vgl. 12,10).

Die Thematik der Auferweckung und des ewigen Lebens, die in Joh 11 im Mittelpunkt steht, wird in der Hirten- und der Tempelweihrede vorbereitet: Jesus sagt von sich, er sei gekommen, damit die Seinen das ewige Leben haben (10,10. 28).

Der Text in Joh 9–11 gibt daher m.E. zu erkennen, dass er — ungeachtet seiner Entstehungsgeschichte — als kohärente Einheit gelesen werden will⁽⁴⁵⁾.

des Tempels), mit dem Jesus dem geforderten Beglaubigungszeichen ein 'Zeichen' ganz anderer Art entgegensetzt, erfüllt sich nach dem Kommentar des Evangelisten (2,21) in seiner Person, nämlich in der Auferweckung seines Leibes", SCHNACKENBURG, *Johannesevangelium*, I, 351-352.

Dass die Heilung des Sohnes eines königlichen Beamten in 4,46-54 ausdrücklich als "zweites" Zeichen bezeichnet wird (4,54), widerspricht dieser Deutung nicht, denn die Zählung könnte sich auf die Wundertaten in Kana beziehen (so v.a. die Vertreter, die die Zählung der Wundertaten als Argument für eine Semeia-Quelle ablehnen).

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Zur forschungsgeschichtlichen Diskussion der Diskontinuität bzw. Kontinuität zwischen Joh 9 und 10 vgl. KOWALSKI, *Die Hirtenrede*, 179-194. Zur grundsätzlichen methodischen Diskussion vgl. einerseits J. BECKER, "Das Johannesevangelium im Streit der Methoden", *ThR* 51 (1986) 1-78; andererseits J. FREY, "Der implizite Leser und die biblischen Texte", *ThBeitr* 23 (1992)

Wo aber liegt der gemeinsame Fluchtpunkt, der diesen drei Kapiteln Einheit verleiht? Er liegt in der Schlussnotiz 20,30.31. Denn die Zwischenschaltung von Joh 10 kann die Schlussfunktion von 20,30.31 in ihrem primären Bezug auf Joh 9 und 11 entscheidend stützen:

In *inhaltlicher* Hinsicht betont die Zwischennotiz zu Johannes dem Täufer den Rückbezug der Passage auf den Beginn des Evangeliums.

In *funktionaler* Hinsicht verstärkt die Hirtenrede die Transparenz der Passage und lässt Joh 9 und 11 als Anfangs- und Endstationen aus dem Leben eines johanneischen Christen verständlich werden.

In *kompositorischer* Hinsicht hebt die Tempelweihrede ⁽⁴⁶⁾ mit ihrer christologischen Spitzenaussage (10,30) die Zentralität der gesamten Passage hervor.

*
* *

Die Schlussnotiz in Joh 20,30.31 hebt die Wunderberichte des Evangeliums besonders hervor. In der Forschung wird seit langem diskutiert, ob es sich bei Joh 20,30.31 um einen passenden Schluss für das Evangelium handelt oder nicht. Der vorliegende Aufsatz hat einen neuen Aspekt in die Diskussion eingebracht: Die Formulierung der Zweckbestimmung in 20,31 lässt erkennen, dass nicht alle Wunderberichte gleich intensiv avisiert sind, sondern dass insbesondere die Erzählung von der Heilung des Blindgeborenen in Joh 9 (ein Mensch kommt zum Glauben an Jesus Christus) und die Erzählung von der Auferweckung des Lazarus in Joh 11 (ein Mensch

266-290; hier: 285-286: "Auch echte literarische Brüche wirken kommunikativ ..., da der Erwartungshorizont eines ‚normalen‘ Lesers ja nicht auf die Wahrnehmung literarischer Brüche hin orientiert ist, sondern zunächst so lange wie möglich daraufhin, einen kohärenten Text vorzufinden und dessen Sinnzusammenhänge nachzuvollziehen". Produktionsorientiert lässt sich mit Blick auf Joh 10 formulieren: Auch die "Redaktoren" wollten einen kohärenten Text schaffen.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Zwischen der Hirtenrede und der Tempelweihrede findet sich vielleicht noch eine andere Verbindung: "Unter den Schriftlesungen für die Liturgie dieses Tempelweihfestes findet sich sowohl Ez 34 wie auch Ez 37,15-28 (mit dem Stichwort der Sammlung Israels zur Einheit unter dem einen Hirten, dem Gottesknecht David: vgl. Joh 10,16). Das könnte darauf hinweisen, daß die Hirtenrede 10,1-21 bereits auf das Tempelweihfest hingeordnet ist. So würde sich auch die Wiederaufnahme der Hauptmotive der Rede in V. 26-29 gut erklären", U. WILCKENS: *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD 4; Göttingen 1998) 170.

erhält das [ewige] Leben) in der Schlussnotiz nochmals anklingen sollen. Aufgrund ihres spezifischen Inhalts und ihres hohen Grades an Transparenz haben Joh 9 und 11 im Vergleich zu den anderen Wunderberichten in besonderem Maße die Funktion, die Leser des Johannesevangeliums zum Glauben zu führen, damit sie das ewige Leben haben.

Die spezielle Bedeutung beider Wunderberichte wird durch ihre Gestaltung und ihre Positionierung innerhalb des Evangeliums unterstrichen. Die oftmals als störend empfundene Zwischenschaltung der Hirtenrede, der Tempelweihrede und der Notiz zum Täufer in Joh 10 erscheint aus dieser Perspektive kohärent.

Insofern kann die hier entfaltete These die Annahme stützen, dass Joh 20,30.31 als passender Schluss für das gesamte Evangelium zu bewerten ist.

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SUMMARY

The emphasis given the 'signs' in the final verses of the Gospel of John (20,30.31) has often, in the history of research, been deemed unsuitable. But such thinking overlooks the fact that the statement of the Gospel's purpose in 20,31 is meant to call to mind especially the story of the healing of the blind man in Chapter 9 (a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ) and the story of the raising of Lazarus in Chapter 11 (a person gains [eternal] life). The particular meaning of these two miracle stories is, through their shaping and their positioning within the Gospel, underlined. Keeping this in mind, John 20,30.31 is a thoroughly suitable ending for the entire Gospel.

The Terms “Angel” and “Spirit” in Acts 23,8

Information concerning the identity and beliefs of the Sadducees is fragmentary. Since none of their own writings survive, scholars must rely on material about them preserved by their religious rivals, the Rabbis, the Christians, and, most importantly, Josephus. Nevertheless, the few statements about them from these disparate sources fit together to provide a fairly consistent portrait of the group. For instance, these texts agree that the group had a foothold in the governing class, rejected the oral Torah of the Pharisees, denied final judgment, and denied the resurrection as well as all other forms of afterlife.

However, the enigmatic statement concerning Sadducean belief recorded in Acts 23,8 is a piece of the puzzle that does not fit well with established findings. In this gloss, the author informs his reader: λέγουσιν μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα. The first part of the phrase, “they say there is no resurrection”, poses no problem, for the Sadducean denial of the resurrection is well established by the principle of multiple attestation (Josephus, *BJ* 2.163-65; *Ant.* 13.297-98; 18.16-17; *San* 90b; *Mark* 12,18-27). In fact, almost identical wording is used to describe their views in *Luke* 20,27 (λέγοντες ἀνάστασιν μὴ εἶναι). The second part of the phrase, “neither angel nor spirit”, is where problems abound and our exploration begins.

Four broad positions have emerged in an attempt to account for the meaning of “angel” and “spirit” in this passage⁽¹⁾. These views are that the Sadducees rejected: 1) belief in the existence of angels and spirits altogether⁽²⁾; 2) excessive speculation in the area of angelology, but

⁽¹⁾ A fifth category could be added to these. Simply put, Luke was incorrect about this belief of the Sadducees due to his use of an inaccurate source or to his own erroneous interpretation of their views. Although his statement about angels is not recorded elsewhere, I find it unlikely that he was misinformed. Compare Luke to Josephus, who is accepted by many scholars as trustworthy despite the fact that he is the sole author to mention the Sadducean denial of fate.

⁽²⁾ Bill., II, 767; M. MANSOOR, “Sadducees”, *EncJud* XIV, 621; H. LOESTER, *Introduction to the New Testament. History, Culture and Religion in the Hellenistic Age* (New York 1987) I, 230; S. TAYLOR, “Sadducees”, *The Concise Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI 1991) 444; one modern translation of the Bible takes this view of Acts 23,8: “The Sadducees say that the dead won’t come back to life and that angels and spirits don’t exist”; *God’s Word* (Grand Rapids, MI 1995).

not the existence of angels and spirits⁽³⁾; 3) belief in the existence of the righteous dead in the form of an angel or spirit in the interim between death and resurrection⁽⁴⁾; and 4) belief that humans would be resurrected in the form of either an angel or a spirit⁽⁵⁾. The first portion of this paper will critique each of the theories proposed above, while the second part will offer some new perspectives.

I. Review and Evaluation of the Theories

1. Sadducean Rejection of the Existence of Angels and Spirits

A few scholars believe that Acts 23,8 indicates a wholesale rejection of angels and spirits on the part of the Sadducees. Although scholars within this group are in agreement that "angel" refers to a supernatural heavenly being, they sometimes differ over whether the word "spirit" refers to preternatural beings or to the disembodied souls of human beings⁽⁶⁾. The strength of this theory, as Meier puts it, is that "the natural sense of the statement is the denial of any angel or spirit whatsoever"⁽⁷⁾.

Despite the simplicity of this theory, the consensus of scholarship is that the Sadducees could not have entirely rejected the existence of these supernatural beings. Several weighty objections that seriously call this view into question are: 1) the singular is used to describe these beings

⁽³⁾ T.W. MANSON, "Sadducee and Pharisee", *BJRL* 22 (1938) 144; G.F. LOORE, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (New York 1971), 68; F.F. BRUCE, *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI 1975) 412.

⁽⁴⁾ D. DAUBE, "On Acts 23: Sadducees and Angels", *JBL* 109 (1990) 493–497. N.T. Wright also envisions the intermediate state in the form of an angel or spirit. However, there is no evidence that his view is based on the research of Daube. See N.T. WRIGHT, *The Challenge of Jesus*. Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is (Downers Grove, IL 1999) 136, 134–135, 138, and 148, n. 12, where he specifically refers to Acts 12,15 and 23,8–10.

⁽⁵⁾ S.T. LACHS, "The Pharisees and Sadducees on Angels: A Reexamination of Acts XXIII.8", *Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies* 6 (1975) 35–42; B.T. VIVIANO – J. TAYLOR, "Sadducees, Angels, and Resurrection (Acts 23:8–9)", *JBL* 111 (1992) 496–498; A.A. BELL endorses the views of Viviano and Taylor in his *Exploring the New Testament World* (Nashville, TN 1998) 33. J.A. FITZMYER is also favorable toward this interpretation, see his *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB31; New York 1998) 719.

⁽⁶⁾ E.g., TAYLOR holds the former view ("Sadducees", 444), while KOESTER holds the latter (*Introduction I*, 230).

⁽⁷⁾ J.P. MEIER, *A Marginal Jew*. Rethinking the Historical Jesus (New York 2001) III, 408. Meier is simply evaluating various theories here. This does not represent his own view.

("angel or spirit") where the plural is expected ("angels or spirits")⁽⁸⁾. Although the collective singular of a noun is attested in both classical and biblical literature⁽⁹⁾, the usage here is a break from the usual plural in Synoptics employed to describe angels as a class of beings (e.g. Mark 12,25; Matt 22,30; Luke 20,36; cf. Acts 7,53). The use of the singular raises the possibility that something other than the description of a class of beings might be intended, as some will argue in a later section; 2) if this minor difference between Pharisees and Sadducees is included in this passage, why are some of the more significant differences omitted?⁽¹⁰⁾; 3) the Sadducees' high regard for the Torah, and probably a larger corpus of scripture, makes it inconceivable that they would have rejected belief in the existence of angels, for these documents are replete with stories of angels⁽¹¹⁾; and 4) the Pharisees and Christians neither criticize nor debate with the Sadducees because of the latter's views concerning angels in biblical or extra-biblical literature⁽¹²⁾. Even when angels are discussed on the periphery of debates with the Sadducees, the existence of these beings is never questioned⁽¹³⁾. These arguments are not of equal weight, but the last two alone are enough to undermine the credibility of this position.

⁽⁸⁾ J. LE MOYNE, *Les Sadducéens* (EB; Paris 1972) 133; LACHS, "Pharisees and Sadducees", 36.

⁽⁹⁾ See the examples in H.W. SMYTH, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge 1984) 269; F. BLASS – A. DEBRUNNER, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL 1961) 77.

⁽¹⁰⁾ LACHS, "Pharisees and Sadducees", 35.

⁽¹¹⁾ L. FINKELSTEIN, *The Pharisees. The Sociological Background of Their Faith* (Philadelphia 1962) I, 179; B.J. BAMBERGER, "The Sadducees and the Belief in Angels", *JBL* 82 (1963) 434; E. HAENCHEN, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia 1971) 638, n. 4; LE MOYNE, *Les Sadducéens*, 132; S. SANDMEL, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York 1978) 480, n. 53; DAUBE, "On Acts 23", 493; MEIER, *Marginal Jew*, III, 408.

⁽¹²⁾ LE MOYNE, *Les Sadducéens*, 132; DAUBE, "On Acts 23", 493; LACHS, "Pharisees and Sadducees", 35.

⁽¹³⁾ When the Sadducees interrogate Jesus in Luke 20,27-40 (and parallels Matt 22,23-33; Mark 12,18-27), they did not protest his assertion that the resurrected dead would be like angels (Luke 20,36). Rather, they conceded that he had argued well. DAUBE ("On Acts 23", 496) records a Sadducee's attack on R. Eliezar concerning the resurrection from the dead (Shab 152b). He inquires how it was possible for the witch of Endor (1 Sam 28,7-19) to conjure up the spirit of Samuel, when, according to the rabbi, the souls of the righteous are "treasured" beneath the Throne of Glory. Daube notes, "the Sadducean attack is not indiscriminate, not directed against the Throne and its wonderful surroundings, justice, life, Ophanim, Angels of the Service, but specifically against assigning mortals a waiting room in that world" (496). His point is weakened because these heavenly beings, often associated with the Throne of Glory (Hag 12b; DeutR 1,10-11), are not mentioned in this encounter.

Before passing on to the evaluation of the next theory, the fourth point mentioned above requires an additional comment. There is only one instance in which a Sadducee seems to deny the existence of angels (San 38b). In this passage, an unnamed Sadducee interrogating R. Idith concerning his views of the angel Metatron, asks whether Metatron or God was the speaker in Exod 24,1. The Sadducee contended that the speaker was God, not Metatron, for otherwise one would end up praying to an angel. This debate seems to have arisen because some Jews believed that Metatron was the "angel of the Lord" (Exod 23,20-23), of whom God said, "my name is in him" (Exod 23,21). Some Jews prayed to Metatron⁽¹⁴⁾, while others regarded him as "the lesser YHWH" (3 Enoch 12,5). The heretic Acher may have gone so far as to identify him with God (Hag 15a)⁽¹⁵⁾. This encounter between the Sadducee and R. Idith seems to be an isolated case and too much should not be made of it. Such a reaction to excessive veneration of a specific angel on the part of *one* Sadducee does not imply a rejection of the existence of the entire angelic world by *all* Sadducees. Moreover, the concerned Sadducee does not deny the existence of angels, but merely argues that one should not pray to them. In this view the Sadducee is not alone. Indeed several talmudic texts also discourage the cult of angels and prayer to them⁽¹⁶⁾.

2. Sadducean Rejection of Angelic Speculation

The claim that Sadducees rejected excessive speculation about angels and spirits, attested among many other Jews of that time, is more difficult to analyze. Several plausible reasons have been proposed in order to account for why the Sadducees might have rejected these views: 1) they may have been generally resistant to change. As Saldarini points out, the dominant class in a society tends to be conservative⁽¹⁷⁾. This is certainly true of the Sadducees, who were part of the governing class, for they resisted the new customs (e.g., oral Torah) and new beliefs about the afterlife (e.g., resurrection) introduced by the Pharisees⁽¹⁸⁾. Perhaps this conservative spirit also led to disdain for the fascination of many Jews in the names, roles, and nature of

⁽¹⁴⁾ A. COHEN, *Everyman's Talmud*. The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages (New York 1975) 52.

⁽¹⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

⁽¹⁶⁾ BAMBERGER, "The Sadducees", 434.

⁽¹⁷⁾ A.J. SALDARINI, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society* (Grand Rapids, MI 2001) 300-304.

⁽¹⁸⁾ *Ibid.*, 304.

angels after the time of the Babylonian exile⁽¹⁹⁾; 2) they may have regarded angels as integral to the apocalyptic worldview. The Sadducees probably endorsed a more “this-worldly” eschatology⁽²⁰⁾ and, therefore, rejected apocalyptic eschatology along with its accompanying “luxuriant angelology and demonology that supplied the drama of the end time with a huge cast of characters”⁽²¹⁾; 3) perhaps they believed angels no longer appeared as they once did. Angels do not play much of a role in the Prophets (with the exception of Zechariah) and the Writings (with the exception of Daniel). The few times they are mentioned in the Prophets, they do not usually serve as messengers with a mission, but rather as the guardians of the ark of the covenant (Ezek 1,10), the temple of God (Isa 6,1-6), or as figures of the distant past (Hos 12,4 [Gen 32,24-32]; Isa 64,9 [Exod 23,20-23; 32,34])⁽²²⁾. Zeitlin’s explanation of this trend is that, “with the advent of the prophets the functions of the angels were dispensed with”, thus giving rise to Sadducean disbelief in the continued intervention of angels⁽²³⁾; or 4) perhaps they rejected angels along with their rejection of providence or fate, for angels could be construed as interfering with free will, a belief which the Sadducees cherished (*BJ* 2.164-65)⁽²⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁹⁾ BELL, *New Testament World*, 33; BRUCE, *Acts*, 412; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Acts of the Apostles (Sacra Pagina 5)*, Collegeville, MN 1992) 398. The Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and Dead Sea Scrolls, serve as witness to an increased interest with angels. According to Josephus, the Essenes even preserved “the names of the angels” (*BJ* 2.142).

⁽²⁰⁾ Meier finds intimations in the Torah and Prophets of “a this-worldly eschatology centered on the Davidic king and/or the Jerusalem temple on Mt. Zion” that may have been endorsed by the Sadducees (*Marginal Jew*, III, 407). Cf. SALDARINI, “They wish to retain the status quo and keep the focus on the nation (and potential kingdom) of Israel in this world, not the next” (*Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*, 300).

⁽²¹⁾ For an evaluation of this position and a list of those holding this view, see MEIER, *Marginal Jew*, III, 406; 465, n. 68. Apocalyptic ideas, which could have had revolutionary implications, probably would have been avoided by the governing class. The Sadducees would have been interested keeping peace with Rome, which was necessary in order for them to retain their power and prosperity. See also SALDARINI, *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees*, 304.

⁽²²⁾ Cf. S. ZEITLIN, “The Sadducees and the Belief in Angels”, *JBL* (1964) 69-70. MEIER proposed, but subsequently rejected this idea; *Marginal Jew*, III, 404. An exception is the angel of the Lord in Isa 37,36.

⁽²³⁾ ZEITLIN, “The Sadducees”, 70-71. Lachs dismisses Zeitlin’s argument because it is unlikely the Sadducees would have denied the existence of angels since they are in the Pentateuch (“Pharisees and Sadducees”, 42, n. 30). However, Zeitlin does not say they denied the existence of angels, but the “functions of angels”, which I take to mean their continued activity (“The Sadducees”, 70-71).

⁽²⁴⁾ ZEITLIN, “The Sadducees”, 71.

Although the picture above is plausible in many respects, there are several difficulties with Zeitlin's views. His attempt to link angels with providence, so that the Sadducees would have justification for rejecting belief in angelic activity, is unconvincing. Despite his citations of passages in which angels are appointed over Israel and the nations (Dan 10,13; 12,1), he was unable to link angels to the idea of providence or fate. His suggestion that the Sadducees believed that angels had been superseded by the prophets also fails, for it is largely an argument from silence⁽²⁵⁾.

3. Sadducean Rejection of the Intermediate State

In a brief article in 1990, David Daube broke ranks with traditional interpretations of Acts 23,8 when he argued that "angel" and "spirit" were virtually synonymous terms describing the state of the righteous dead in the interim between death and the resurrection⁽²⁶⁾. According to Daube, this passage indicates that the doctrinal matter with which the Sadducees took issue was the survival of the soul after death (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.1.4; *BJ* 2.164-165), not the existence of angels and spirits. Thus, in Acts 23, the Sadducees denied that the spirit (i.e., angel) of Jesus could have appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus and later in the temple (Acts 22,6-10; 17-21), because of their belief that the soul perished with the body at death. The Pharisees, on the other hand, affirmed both the survival of the soul and the resurrection, but could not bring themselves to acknowledge the appearance of the resurrected Jesus to Saul.

Daube's argument hinges on his ability to prove that "angel" and "spirit" were synonyms describing the interim. Although Daube makes a good case for "spirit" serving as a description of humans during the interim⁽²⁷⁾, he is unable to show that the term "angel" was also used to

⁽²⁵⁾ This situation is comparable to Lachs critique of Finkelstein: "How can one speak of a denial of angels by the author of Esther when we do not even know his conception of God who is not mentioned in the book?" ("Pharisees and Sadducees", 42, n. 30).

⁽²⁶⁾ The theory of Le Moyne is similar to this one with the exception that he believes that these two terms may refer to the state of man after death, whether resurrected or not (LE MOYNE *Les Sadducéens*, 134, 135). In an attempt not to multiply theories, I have chosen to interact with Le Moyne's views in the footnotes since it straddles Daube's "intermediate state" theory and the "resurrection" theories of Lachs, Viviano, and Taylor.

⁽²⁷⁾ DAUBE, "On Acts 23", 494-5; Hen(aeth) 22,3.7; 49,3; 103,3-4; Luke 24,36-43.

describe this state⁽²⁸⁾. The majority of the passages that he cites that depict the righteous dead being like angels are in reality concerned with the resurrection instead of the interim⁽²⁹⁾. The only passage he lists that unambiguously associates angels with the righteous dead in the intermediate state is Hen(aeth) 39,5. Yet, the passage does not indicate these terms are synonyms: *dwelling* “with the holy angels” is not tantamount to *being* holy angels.

Daube’s second line of argument is to list several texts that say the righteous dead are “like” the angels. He correctly notes that the words *ὡς* and *ἴσως* can have a broad range of meaning, such as “resembling”, “equal to”, or even “having the nature of”⁽³⁰⁾. However, other details within the context of a passage sometimes shed further light on an author’s intended meaning of “like” the angels, as the following examples cited by Daube illustrate: 1) according to Hen(aeth) 104,4, the resurrected righteous will “be making a great rejoicing like the angels of heaven” (cf. 25,6). The comparison here seems to be to how the angels rejoice (Hen[aeth] 35,12; 40,3), not to being transformed into their likeness; 2) in ApcBar(syr) 51,12, the righteous will be changed “into the splendor of the angels” (51,5) and will also be “like” them in some other respects (51,10), but the righteous will also be “greater than the angels” in excellence (51,12). Thus, absolute identity between the righteous dead and angels cannot be maintained; and, 3) Luke 20,36 and Matt 22,30 indicate the raised will be “like” or “equal to” the angels in specific ways: they too will be immortal and will not marry with a view towards procreation. So, it is fair to conclude from these texts that the resurrected righteous will have some of the attributes of angels, but not that they will be changed into angels⁽³¹⁾. Thus, the word “angel” is not a synonym of human “spirit”, whether one is speaking of the interim or the resurrection of the dead.

⁽²⁸⁾ MEIER writes, “there is no Jewish or Christian text from the 1st century A.D. that clearly equates ‘spirit’ and ‘angel’ in the sense of a human being’s postmortem, interim mode of existence before the resurrection” (*A Marginal Jew*, III, 408).

⁽²⁹⁾ Viviano and Taylor make this point concerning one of Daube’s examples (Matt 22,30 and parallels, “Sadducees”, 497), but it is true of all of the latter’s examples (Matt 22,30; Mark 12,25; Luke 20,36; Hen(aeth) 104,4-6; ApcBar(syr) 51,1.5.10.12; DAUBE, “On Acts 23”, 494.

⁽³⁰⁾ Ibid., 494.

⁽³¹⁾ Other texts, not mentioned by Daube, also note the similarity of the righteous to angels or stars at the resurrection (*LAB* 33.5) or at the point when the immortal soul discards the body (Philo, *Sacr.* 5). The later view is more in line with Daube’s theory, in that it describes a disembodied state (*ἀσώματοι*), but is not identical to it since there is no interim state. For Philo, the disembodied state is the final state (Philo, *Quis Rerum* 276).

Daube also employed Peter's angel (Acts 12,15) as further proof for an angelic interim. In this passage, Peter had just been delivered from prison and stood knocking at the gate of a house where a group of Christians was praying for him. When a servant girl, in her excitement, left him outside and informed those praying inside that he was at the gate, they told her that it was his angel (ὁ ἄγγελός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ). Some commentators believe this is evidence of the belief in a special type of guardian angel "who is the exact image of his protégé"⁽³²⁾. Daube proposed instead that these Christians understood this to be Peter in his angelic, interim state. His reason for rejecting the guardian angel interpretation was because the rabbinic evidence for this notion is "thin". He is correct that this particular type of guardian angel (i.e., a celestial double) is not well attested. Be that as it may, the biblical and extra-biblical evidence is thick with the notion of guardian angels (Gen 48,16; Dan 3,28; 6,22; Matt 18,10; Heb 1,14; Tob 5,22; LAB 15,5; 59,4; Test. Jacob 1,10). Perhaps this was Peter's guardian angel or perhaps this figure was designated "his angel" simply because it had delivered him from prison before (the same ἄγγελος κυρίου; Acts 5,19, 12,7). Whatever the correct interpretation is, in the absence of more compelling evidence, this example cannot serve as proof for an angelic interim state.

Probably the most compelling reasons for rejecting the identification of "angel" and "spirit" is that Luke himself does so. His use of "neither ... nor" (μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα; Acts 23,8) and "or" (πνεῦμα ... ἢ ἄγγελος; 23,9) distinguishes between "angel" and "spirit" and thereby indicates they are not regarded by him as synonyms⁽³³⁾.

In summary, Daube's theory is untenable because he: 1) failed to locate texts that specifically used "angel" and "spirit" as synonyms for disembodied humans during the interim period⁽³⁴⁾; 2) failed to demonstrate that being "like" an angel was the same as becoming an angel; and 3) the author of Acts indicates by his language that these words are not synonyms. Therefore, it seems unlikely that the Sadducees were being portrayed as rejecting the belief in the intermediate state in Acts 23,8, even though that was one of the beliefs they did deny elsewhere (e.g., BJ 2.165).

⁽³²⁾ DAUBE, "On Acts 23", 496. LE MOYNE says that "angel" here "est en quelque sorte le double immortel de l'homme" (*Les Sadducéens*, 13).

⁽³³⁾ VIVIANO – TAYLOR, "Sadducees", 497; MEIER, *Marginal Jew*, III, 408-9.

⁽³⁴⁾ This is also a shortcoming of Le Moyne's theory.

4. Sadducean Rejection of Resurrection as an Angel or Spirit

This theory concerning Acts 23,8 maintains that the words “angel” and “spirit” stand in apposition to the word “resurrection” and, therefore, describe two modes of resurrection: resurrection as an angel or as a spirit. There are two major proponents of this view. Samuel Tobias Lachs seems to have been the first to propose this interpretation in an article in 1977⁽³⁵⁾. In 1990, Viviano and Taylor, in an attempt to give this line of speculation “wider publicity”, revived the theory with some refinements of their own.

Lachs raised five important objections to the older proposal that the Sadducees denied the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits, which appeared above in the rebuttal of the first theory:

- 1) Why are angels and spirits not mentioned in either Josephus or in the tannaitic literature as points of controversy between the Sadducees and Pharisees?
- 2) If the latter two, *i.e.*, angel and spirit, are separate entities, not connected with resurrection, and are cited presumably only to show further differences between the sects, why are not more important differences mentioned?
- 3) How could the Sadducees, who were slavishly wedded to the literal meaning of the biblical text, deny the existence of angels who are mentioned throughout the Bible?
- 4) If three points were intended, how is the phrase “the Pharisees acknowledge them both” to be understood?
- 5) If (ἄγγελος) and (πνεῦμα) are separate entities unrelated to (ἀνάστασιν), then one would expect the plural, *i.e.* (ἄγγελοι) and (πνεύματα) respectively⁽³⁶⁾.

These are excellent points. They have undermined the credibility of the first position (*i.e.*, the denial of angels) and even have ramifications for the second position (*i.e.*, the denial of excessive speculation about angels and spirits). I will attempt to answer these queries at this point before moving on to some objections of my own. The points are not addressed in the same order in which they were asked. Points one and three will not be addressed, since they have been treated earlier in this article.

In response to point two, the intention of Acts 23,8 does not seem

⁽³⁵⁾ LACHS, “Pharisees and Sadducees”, 38. He suggests there were three views of afterlife current in Second Temple Judaism: resurrection of the physical body, resurrection in a spiritual body, and resurrection as a pure spirit, 36-37.

⁽³⁶⁾ LACHS, “Pharisees and Sadducees”, 35-36. All but the second and fifth of these had been pondered earlier by LE MOYNE, *Les Sadducéens*, 131-134.

to be just a catalogue of the major differences between Sadducees and Pharisees. Nor is its purpose to list various types of afterlife, as they suggest. If that were so, the traditional formula, “who say there is no resurrection” (Luke 20,27; Act 23,8a), would have sufficed to cover anything falling under the rubric of resurrection, including the various modes of resurrection proposed by Lachs, Viviano, and Taylor.

Rather, the purpose of this gloss is to introduce the beliefs necessary for the reader of Acts to make sense of the controversies that have arisen and will soon arise in the passage, as the following chart illustrates:

Paul raises Issue One: “Brothers, I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection (ἀναστάσεως) of the dead” (Acts 23,6)

Luke explains Issue One in retrospect: “The Sadducees say there is no resurrection (ἀνάστασιν). . .” (Acts 23,8)

Luke explains Issue Two in advance: “... or angel or spirit (μήτε ἄγγελον μήτε πνεῦμα) but the Pharisees acknowledge them all” (Acts 23,8)

Pharisees raise Issue Two: “What if a spirit (πνεῦμα) or an angel (ἄγγελος) has spoken to him?” (Acts 23,9)

The reader is *reminded* that the Sadducees say “there is no resurrection” (23,8; cf. Luke 20,27; Acts 4,1.2) and that the Pharisees affirm it after Paul cried out that he was on trial for the “hope and resurrection of the dead” (23,6). The reader is also *forewarned* that the Sadducees reject both “angel” and “spirit” (23,8). This is a pertinent detail, for in the following verse, the scribes of the Pharisees ask: “What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him [i.e., Paul]?” (23,9), an allusion to the events of Acts 22,6-21. Thus, in answer to point five, the use of the singular forms “angel” and “spirit” becomes clear. It is not merely a rejection of the general belief in the appearance of angels and spirits, but the denial that a particular being, Jesus as either “an angel” or “a spirit”, appeared to Paul with a message⁽³⁷⁾. However, if the Sadducees denied that this particular angel or spirit served as a messenger, then this suggests that they also denied such messenger activities on the part of all angels and spirits. Thus, the “more important differences” (point two) between the Pharisees and Sadducees are in reality mentioned, since these are the issues pertinent to this encounter.

The argument of point four is that τὰ ἀμφοτέρω should be translated “both”, and that it refers to the two words “angel” and “spirit” standing

⁽³⁷⁾ HAENCHEN, *Acts*, 639; M.L. SOARDS, *The Speeches in Acts*. Their Content, Context, and Concerns (Louisville, KY 1994) 116.

in apposition to “resurrection”. In other words, according to this theory, the Sadducees deny both resurrection as angel and resurrection as a spirit. It is possible to understand the adjective in this manner, but dogmatism must be avoided here. Several scholars have likewise argued for the translation “both” in this passage, but have concluded that the first belief was the resurrection and the second was belief in angels and spirits⁽³⁸⁾. Others argue that τὰ ἀμφοτέρω can mean “all” and that it refers to three items in this passage: the resurrection, angels, and spirit⁽³⁹⁾. The latter view is substantiated not only by extra-biblical usage, but also by Acts 19,16 where it refers to seven items.

The remainder of this section consists of an examination of several objections to the resurrection theory. The first issue plaguing the scholars arguing for this view is that they fail to discuss how their definitions of “angel” and “spirit” in Acts 23,8 would make sense in 23,9, where these words appear in the pericope for the second time. It seems reasonable to think that these words should have the same meaning in both of these passages⁽⁴⁰⁾, that is, according to the resurrection theory, they should signify modes of resurrection in both verse 8 and 9.

An application of their definitions to Act 23,9 forces us to the unlikely conclusion that the Pharisees allowed for the possibility that Jesus had been raised from the dead in one of these two forms. It follows that if the Pharisees endorsed belief in “angel” and “spirit” resurrection bodies in 23,8, that they must also allow for the possibility that someone in a “spirit” or “angel” resurrection body appeared to Paul in 23,9. That *someone* who appeared to Paul was Jesus on the road to Damascus and in the temple (22,6-21)⁽⁴¹⁾. Given these facts, it seems that these scholars are compelled to accept the following paraphrase of the Pharisiac response in 23,9: “Perhaps Jesus appeared to Paul in a spiritual resurrection body or an angelic resurrection body”. Is it really plausible to believe that the Pharisees have suddenly become advocates of the

⁽³⁸⁾ BRUCE, *Acts*, 412.

⁽³⁹⁾ M. ZERWICK, *Biblical Greek* (Rome 1963) 51.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ See BAMBERGER, “The Sadducees”, 435. LE MOYNE noted the relationship in terminology between Acts 23,8 and 23,9, but did not comment on the problem posed by his own theory, in which a person might have been raised (according to one interpretation), by having a Pharisee entertain the notion of Jesus’ resurrection, *Les Sadducéens*, 132.

⁽⁴¹⁾ One might object that Paul’s call has not been mentioned in his speech to the Council. However, the scribes’ statement in 23,9 assumes that the Council has a basic knowledge of the Damascus experience (BRUCE, *Acts*, 412; HAENCHEN, *Acts*, 638-639; DAUBE, “On Acts 23”, 495; SOARDS, *Speeches*, 116).

resurrection of Jesus?⁽⁴²⁾ This is highly unlikely, since conceding his resurrection would also entail the possibility that Jesus had actually been right about such matters as the Sabbath and purity laws.

The second problem with this theory has to do with the time of the resurrection. The "hope and resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23,6), which both Paul and the Pharisees affirmed⁽⁴³⁾ and the Sadducees denied⁽⁴⁴⁾, was expected to be an eschatological event in biblical and extra-biblical literature⁽⁴⁵⁾. More important for the interpretation of this passage, the resurrection is also an eschatological event in the theology of Luke-Acts. Paul's defense in a later passage makes more explicit the belief in a future resurrection that both he and the Pharisees held in common: "I have a hope in God — a hope that they themselves also accept — that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous" (Acts 24,15).

Having established the eschatological nature of the resurrection,

⁽⁴²⁾ Daube is correct concerning the Pharisees' response to Paul's experiences, "They cannot fall in with his interpretation of them — the risen Savior. But they do admit the possibility of a visit sponsored by God in order to transmit advice" ("On Acts 23", 495). So JOHNSON, "The Pharisaic willingness to recognize *some* sort of transcendental experience (that they can fit within their categories and at the same time use against the Sadducees) works to Paul's purpose, but also falls short of recognizing the key point, which is the reality of the resurrection in Paul's experience of Jesus as Lord" (*Acts*, 399). J. MURPHY-O-CONNER writes, "The resurrection was the sign that validated the mission of Jesus and guaranteed his teaching. No Christian could avoid speaking of it and, once heard, it would rattle in the memory of a Pharisee"; *Paul. A Critical Life* (New York 1997) 77.

⁽⁴³⁾ Acts 24,15. The Pharisaic belief in the resurrection as an eschatological event is confirmed by extra-biblical sources as well. Josephus records that this group believed that the souls of the righteous would receive "passage to a new life" (*Ant.* 18.14). In his speech at Jotapata, Josephus states his conviction that "their souls, remaining spotless and obedient, are allotted the most holy place in heaven, whence in the revolution of the ages, they return to find in chaste bodies a new habitation" (*BJ* 3.374-375). Elsewhere, he states that "...God has granted a renewed existence and in the revolution of ages the gift of a better life" (*Ap.* 218). Viviano and Taylor suggest that the Myth of Er (Plato, *Republic*, 10.614-621) is analogous to Josephus' views ("Sadducees", 498). Yet, the only similarities are that the soul passes into another body and that the soul is immortal. The end results are different, for in Plato, several reincarnations are required of the soul prior to final disembodiment, whereas in Josephus, the immortal soul passes to one body at the revolution of the ages (i.e., the end of the age).

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Luke 20,27-40; Acts 4,2.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ M.J. HARRIS, *From Grave to Glory. Resurrection in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI 1990) 286; WRIGHT, *The Challenge of Jesus*, 137; Dan 12,1-4.13; John 11,24; 1 Thess 4,16-17; *LAB* 3.10; Sib 4.171-190; *ApcBar(syr)* 42,7; 48,47; 49,2; 50,4; 51,1; TestJob 4,9; RHSh 16b-17a.

the proponents of the resurrection body theory have the burden of addressing the following issues: First, if the Pharisees allowed for the possibility that the risen Jesus appeared to Paul, as one must if he consistently applies the definitions inherent in this theory to Acts 23,9, how can this be reconciled with belief in a future resurrection? Obviously the appearance of Jesus to Paul was not an eschatological event since it transpired approximately two and a half decades prior to the trial recorded in Acts 23. It is inconceivable that the Pharisees would have drawn the conclusion that Jesus had been raised from the dead in any form (angel or spirit), for the resurrection was yet future (Acts 24,15). In their mind, Jesus would have to wait to be raised with the rest of humanity. They certainly would not have thought his resurrection took place at the moment of his death. Second, if the Pharisees endorsed the possibility of Jesus' own resurrection, does this not put them in the position of conceding that the resurrection had already begun and, consequently, that Jesus was "first to rise from the dead" (Acts 26,23)? It is doubtful that the Pharisees would have allowed that the resurrection had begun before the end of the age. This, of course, is what the early Christians believed (Acts 26,23; 1 Cor 15,20.23), but one can hardly expect the Pharisees to have given ground to them by conceding Jesus' resurrection as an angel or spirit merely to score points against their Sadducean opponents.

The final problem with the resurrection theory has to do with the nomenclature it employs to describe afterlife. The most unusual aspect of this theory may be its unconventional definition of "resurrection". Viviano and Taylor assume this term is interchangeable with various forms of afterlife, even the survival of the "spirit" or soul "apart from the body"⁽⁴⁶⁾. In one passage, they suggest that resurrection should "be understood here in a broad sense as 'life after death' and certainly does not have to be taken as implying the resuscitation or reconstitution of corpses. What is asserted is rather the hope of personal victory over death, which in the first century was expressed in a variety of ways"⁽⁴⁷⁾. In similar fashion, Lachs thinks that variety of the resurrection may have been "more Hellenistically oriented, as pure spirit"⁽⁴⁸⁾.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ In all fairness, Viviano and Taylor do mention the possibility of combined belief in the immortality of the soul with the resurrection of the body. However, they favor the view that Acts 23,8 refers to either resurrection or immortality of the spirit without a body (VIVIANO – TAYLOR, "Sadducees", 497, n. 6; 498).

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Ibid., 498.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ LACHS, "Pharisees and Sadducees", 36.

These authors correctly observe that Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism had quite diverse views on afterlife, but "life after death" is not the equivalent of "resurrection". Resurrection was just one form of life after death and seems to include a body of some sort in the majority of cases. N.T. Wright's assessment of first century Judaism seems more accurate:

though there was a range of belief about life after death, *the word resurrection was only used to describe reembodiment, not the state of disembodied bliss. Resurrection* was not a general word for "life after death" or for "going to be with God" in some general sense. It was the word for what happened when God created newly embodied human beings after whatever sort of intermediate state there might be⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Wright's comments are representative of the views of many modern writers who maintain a distinction between spiritual immortality and resurrection in their classification of Jewish beliefs about afterlife. Although the terminology employed to classify various types of afterlife may vary somewhat, "resurrection" is usually reserved for embodied afterlife (in either tangible or less tangible form), whereas disembodied afterlife is usually referred to by terms such as the "immortality of the soul alone" or "spiritual immortality"⁽⁵⁰⁾.

These distinctions are not a modern construct, for many in the ancient world used similar categories. Josephus distinguishes between those who believe in no afterlife (i.e. Sadducees; *BJ* 2.165), in the immortality of the soul apart from the body (i.e. Essenes; *BJ* 2.154-158), and in the immortality of the soul in a body (i.e. Pharisees; *BJ* 2.163). The early church fathers also distinguished between the immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body⁽⁵¹⁾. Justin Martyr mentions those "who say that there is no resurrection from the dead,

⁽⁴⁹⁾ WRIGHT, *The Challenge of Jesus*, 134.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ A.-M. DUBARLE, "Belief in Immortality in the Old Testament and Judaism", *Immortality and Resurrection* (ed. P. BENOIT – R. MURPHY) (New York 1970) 34, 40-45; G. VERMES, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Qumran in Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA 1985) 187; W.D. DAVIES, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (Mifflintown, PA 1998) 298-303; HARRIS, *From Grave to Glory*, 45, 69-79; E.P. SANDERS, *Judaism. Practice and Belief 63 BCE -66 CE*, (Valley Forge, PA 1992) 298-303; N. GILLMAN, *The Death of Death. Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought* (Woodstock, VT 1997) 83; R. BAUCKHAM, "Life, Death, and the Afterlife in Second Temple Judaism", *Life in the Face of Death. The Resurrection Message of the New Testament* (ed. R.N. LONGENECKER) (Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 86-90; WRIGHT, *The Challenge of Jesus*, 133-134.

⁽⁵¹⁾ H.A. WOLFSON, "Immortality and Resurrection in the Philosophy of the Church Fathers", *Immortality and Resurrection* (ed. K. STENDAHL) (New York 1965) 61.

but that immediately at death their souls would ascend to heaven" (*Dial.*, 80)⁽⁵²⁾. Augustine wrote that while, "on the immortality of the soul many gentile philosophers have disputed at great length and in many books they have left it written that the soul is immortal, when they came to the resurrection of the flesh, they doubt not indeed, but they most openly deny it, describing it to be absolutely impossible that this earthly flesh can ascend to heaven" (*Enarr. in Psalm 88,5*)⁽⁵³⁾. Even Luke distinguished between a resurrection body which had "flesh and bone" and a spirit that had none (Luke 24,37-39). Thus, there is ample justification for making a distinction between immortality of the soul and the resurrection based on ancient literature.

In closing our argument, there are three general points that need to be made about the concept of resurrection. First of all, to define "resurrection" in the form of a spirit as being "without a body" is out of line with most Jewish, Christian, and even Greek⁽⁵⁴⁾ thinking of the day, as we have just seen. Although the ways in which Jews and Christians envisioned the resurrection body could vary greatly, most have in common the belief in some sort of body. Resurrection could entail a simple restoration of the body to life (Sib 4.181-182; *ApcBar*(syr) 50,2; *LAB* 3.10, *animam et carnem*), a transformation of the body (*ApcBar*[syr] 51,1; 1 Cor 15,51; Phil 3,21), or the soul's migration to a new body (*Ant.* 18.14; *BJ* 3.374; *Ap.* 2.218). It could involve a solid body or a less solid one. But, "resurrection" is not an appropriate term to describe the survival of the spirit without a body.

Second, texts mentioning the resurrection of the soul or spirit are rare⁽⁵⁵⁾. One might even inquire as to how well Lachs, Viviano, and Taylor provide textual evidence for the "resurrection" as a spirit as a major category of afterlife, for: 1) some texts speak of the immortality of the soul rather than resurrection (Wis 3,1-3; 4,7; 5,16; 7,20; Jub 23,31; 4 Macc 9,8.22; 10,15; 14,5; 15,2; 16,13; 17,5.18; several texts

⁽⁵²⁾ Quotation taken from O. CULLMANN, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead", *Immortality and Resurrection*, 46.

⁽⁵³⁾ Quotation taken from WOLFSON, "Immortality", 51.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ A. OEPKE concludes that, with the exception of the transmigration of souls, the Greeks spoke of resurrection in two ways: 1) resurrection from the dead did not occur (e.g. Homer, *Illiad* 21.56; Herodotus, *Hist.* 3.62; Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1360; *Eumenides* 648; Sophocles, *Electra* 137); and 2) resurrection could take place as an isolated miracle (e.g. Plato, *Symposium* 179c). But, "the idea of the general resurrection at the end of the age is alien to the Greeks"; "ἀνίστημι, ἐξανίστημι, ἀνάστασις, ἐξανάστασις", *TDNT* I, 369.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ HARRIS, *From Grave to Glory*, 76.

from Philo)⁽⁵⁶⁾. None of these texts use the word resurrection, but rather speak of the immortality and incorruption of the soul (e.g. Wis 2,23; 9,15). Some texts indicate that at the death of the body the soul is granted immortality and is immediately taken into heaven (4 Macc 9,22; 13,17; 14,5; 16,13.15; 17,18; Josephus' description of the Essenes, *BJ* 2.154-55). In others, particularly the works of Philo where Platonic influence is strong, souls are portrayed as immortal by nature and will escape their bodies at death⁽⁵⁷⁾; 2) in some texts it is unclear whether resurrection of the soul alone is implied. For instance, Hen(aeth) 103,3-4, says that the spirits of the righteous "shall live". Is this an allusion to resurrection of the spirit alone or to the raising of the soul from the underworld for reunion with its body?⁽⁵⁸⁾; and 3) more often, the resurrection of souls refers to conjuring the dead⁽⁵⁹⁾.

Third, if resurrection is the survival of bodily death, as Viviano and Taylor would have it, from whence is the immortal soul "raised"? It would not be raised "from the dead", for it never died. It would not be raised from the tomb, for it never went there. Rather, the immortal soul sloughs off the body at death (e.g., Wisdom; Philo) or it is made immortal at death and assumed into heaven (e.g., 4 Maccabees). So then, in what sense is it meaningful to speak of the "resurrection" or "raising" of the immortal soul when it merely survives death?

In summary, the attempt to explain "angel or spirit" as forms of resurrection in Acts 23,8 fails because: 1) the meaning for the words "angel" and "spirit" in Acts 23,9, as modes of resurrection, places the Pharisees in the unhappy position of acknowledging the possibility of the resurrection of Jesus and perhaps the onset of the age to come; 2) the theory of Viviano and Taylor uses an unusual definition for "resurrection" which does not fit well with the ancient or modern use of that term.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ LACHS, "Pharisees and Sadducees", 40, n. 13 and 14; VIVIANO – TAYLOR, "Sadducees", 497.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ VIVIANO – TAYLOR, "Sadducees", 497. Ironically, the Myth of the Charioteer in Plato's *Phaedo* (146-250) is suggested as a possible influence on the belief in spirit resurrection among the Pharisees. It clearly teaches the immortality of the soul, but does not use the terminology of resurrection. Instead, Plato speaks of the transmigration of the soul, which after a period of several incarnations, finds its final release from the body.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ The latter view is suggested by its proximity to Hen(aeth) 104,1, which seems to imply an angelic, bodily form of resurrection (note the allusion to Dan 12,3, "shall shine like the lights of heaven"; cf. Hen(aeth) 22,1-13; 25,6).

⁽⁵⁹⁾ LAB 64.5; Josephus, *Ant.* 6.329; cf. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* VI, 97-100 and *Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World* 17-20. For the last two texts see ANET I, 40-75; 80-85.

II. A New Proposal on an Old Theme

In the review and evaluation of the literature, several key items have emerged that help to formulate rudimentary criteria for explaining the significance of “angel” and “spirit”. A theory should fit well with known facts about what the Sadducees deny and the Pharisees affirm (which goes without saying, since all the contributors have attempted to do this). It should maintain a distinction between “angel” and “spirit”, as Lachs, Viviano, and Taylor pointed out. And, as Daube and Le Moyne indicated, it should consistently apply any assigned definitions of the terms “angel” or “spirit” in Acts 23,8 to the appearance of Jesus to Paul mentioned in 23,9.

None of the four theories examined is completely adequate as formulated⁽⁶⁰⁾. Yet, of all the theories, I believe that the Sadducean rejection of angelic speculation retains the most explanatory power, even though it too has several weak points that need shoring up. In the section that follows, I will attempt to show how this theory fulfills the criteria mentioned in the preceding paragraph and, with modifications, makes the most sense in interpreting Acts 23,8.

1. *Criterion One: Facts Related to the Sadducees*

This criterion is satisfied by linking the Sadducees’ rejection of angels and spirits to their rejection of the apocalyptic world view and fate. The first item is probably secure as it stands, for it is difficult to imagine the Sadducees endorsing a world view so contrary to their own. This is because the apocalyptic world view is characterized by determinism (e.g. Dan 2,29-45; ApcBar(syr) 27; Jub 1,29; 32,21; 1QS 11.11) instead of free will, as well as by resurrection or immortality of the soul rather than annihilation at death. However, the demonstration of a connection between fate and supernatural beings, such as angels and spirits, requires a bit of demonstration, for, as far as I am aware, this notion has been asserted but not proven.

In several passages Josephus relates the range of beliefs held by groups of his day concerning fate: the Sadducees deny fate altogether, favoring free will; the Essenes attribute everything to fate, and the

⁽⁶⁰⁾ As we have seen, Daube’s theory faltered because he failed to demonstrate that “angel” and “spirit” were synonyms. The theories of Lachs and Viviano likewise faltered because the “angel” and “spirit” resurrection bodies made no sense as an affirmation of the Pharisees in the context of Acts 23,9. The view that the Sadducees denied the belief in angels and spirits altogether seems implausible because the Torah, which the group accepted, was filled with such beings.

Pharisees allow for a mixture of fate and free will (*Ant.* 13.171-173; 18.13; *BJ* 2.162-165). Since Josephus' view of fate has been described as "the executive aspect of the Divine will"⁽⁶¹⁾, one might well ask through what agencies the divine plan was specifically carried out in history and nature. One method was to employ various types of messengers, particularly prophets⁽⁶²⁾ and angels. The latter group will be the focus of the rest of this section.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, angels are administrators of predestination:

He has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and injustice ... For it is He who created the spirits of Light and Darkness and founded every action upon them and established every deed [upon] their [ways]" (1QS 3.17b-24a; 1QS 3.25b-26a)⁽⁶³⁾. Thou hast decreed for us a destiny of Light according to Thy truth. And the Prince of Light Thou hast appointed from ancient times to come to our support; [all the sons of righteousness are in his hand], and all the spirits of truth are under his dominion (1QM 13.9b-10).

In these texts God has predetermined that each person will be under the dominion of the two spirits, as in the first passage, or be influenced by them for good or evil, as in the second⁽⁶⁴⁾.

In Josephus' reshaping of the biblical narratives, fate and providence sometimes take over the functions previously performed by angels⁽⁶⁵⁾. In the story of Daniel, the angel who shut the mouths of the lions (*Dan* 6,22) is replaced by "the Deity and His Providence" (τὸ θεῖον καὶ τὴν τοῦτου πρόνοιαν; *Ant.* 10.260; cf. 262)⁽⁶⁶⁾. Likewise, the three young men are not rescued from the flames of the furnace by one who looked like "a son of god", as in *Dan.* 3,25, but by "divine providence" (θεῖα σώζονται προνοία; *Ant.* 10.214). Instead of a lying spirit (πνεῦμα ψευδές; 1 Kgs 22,22.23 LXX) entering the mouth of false prophets to "deceive" (ἀπατήσει) Ahab (1 Kgs 22,20.22 LXX),

⁽⁶¹⁾ S. MASON, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees. A Composition-Critical Study* (SPB 39; Leiden 1991) 136.

⁽⁶²⁾ J. BLENKINSOPP, "Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus", *JJS* 25 (1974) 239-262.

⁽⁶³⁾ All quotations from the Dead Sea Scrolls are taken from G. VERMES, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York 1995).

⁽⁶⁴⁾ E.P. SANDERS, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia 1987) 258-9.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ For the relationship between the terms "fate", "destiny", and "providence" in Josephus, see BLENKINSOPP, "Prophecy", 249, n. 41.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ See *BJ* 3.391, where Josephus closely associates "fortune" (τύχη) and "providence" (πρόνοια).

fate (χρεών) “deceived” him (ἀπατηθείς; *Ant.* 8.420; cf. 8.409)⁽⁶⁷⁾. Thus, according to Josephus, fate and providence were sometimes administered by supernatural beings.

The Talmud recounts a story of how an angel assists in setting certain aspects of a person’s destiny just prior to conception:

The angel appointed over conception is named Lailah. He takes a seminal drop, sets it before the Holy One, blessed be He, and asks, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! What is to become of this drop? Is it to develop into a person strong or weak, rich or poor?’ But no mention is made of its becoming a wicked or righteous person (Nid 16a)⁽⁶⁸⁾.

Whereas health and social class are predetermined, a person’s free moral agency is preserved⁽⁶⁹⁾.

The Essenes, Josephus, and the Talmud endorse the concept of predestination, even though they differed over whether or not free will exists. They also agree that angels were sometimes involved in the inner workings of predestination⁽⁷⁰⁾. This helps to explain why the Sadducees would have objected to the operation of angels and spirits (good or evil) in the universe.

2. Criterion Two: *The Distinction Between Angel and Spirit*

The distinction between angel and spirit could be accounted for in several ways. One possibility is that angels are contrasted to human spirits. If “spirit” refers to disembodied humans prior to resurrection, as Daube suggested, then this fits well with the Sadducean denial that the soul survives the death of the body. This definition also fits well in the context of Acts 23,8-9, where it would mean that the Sadducees did not believe that the spirit of a dead person visited Paul, whereas the Pharisees, or other Jews of the day, would not have hesitated to believe in a message from beyond the grave⁽⁷¹⁾.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ BLENKINSOPP, “Prophecy”, 250.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ This quotation is taken from COHEN, *Everyman’s Talmud*, 93.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ This mixture of predestination and free will resembles Josephus’ description of the Pharisees; *ibid.*; cf. also חכמי צפון והרשעה נזונה, Av 3.19.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Several of the Post-Apostolic Fathers believed angels were deeply involved in the government of the universe (Justin, 2 *Apology* 5; Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians* 24; Origen, *Against Celsus* 7.68; 8.31). See G.A. BOYD, *Satan and the Problem of Evil* (Downers Grove, IL 2001) 39-49.

⁽⁷¹⁾ Josephus, the Pharisee, accepts that the witch of Endor brought back the soul (ψυχή) of Samuel from Hades and gave a message to Saul (*Ant.* 6.332). In San. 102b, the spirit of Manasseh spoke to R. Ashi in a dream. In later rabbinic material, the soul of the dead might hover round the tomb for three days (LevR 18,1; cf. John

Another option is that “angel” and “spirit” are used to distinguish genera (e.g., Cherubim, Seraphim, and Ophanim) or rank (e.g., archangel and angel) of heavenly beings⁽⁷²⁾. If so, the Sadducees might have rejected them on the same grounds as angels, that is, for their role in the oversight of predestination.

Finally, “spirit” could refer to the Holy Spirit⁽⁷³⁾. However, this option seems somewhat less likely, due to the fact that Luke often qualifies this use of Spirit with words like “holy”⁽⁷⁴⁾. There are some uses of “spirit”, in the sense of “Holy Spirit”, without qualifiers. Even then, other words in these contexts frequently make it clear that the Holy Spirit was intended by the author⁽⁷⁵⁾.

3. Criterion Three: Relevance to the Context of Acts 23

With these facts in mind, it is time to turn to the context of Acts in order to see why Paul’s description of his religious experiences would have been objectionable to the Sadducees. The primary objection here seems to be that an angel or spirit “spoke” (ἐλάλησεν) to Paul⁽⁷⁶⁾. Why, then, would the Sadducees have had an objection to a spirit or angel speaking to Paul? I propose that they perceived both the *event* of revelation to Paul and the *content* of that revelation via an angel or a spirit to be at odds with their view on fate or providence.

11,17.39) or the soul of the dead might ascend and descend for as much as a year after death, as is argued here for the soul of Samuel, DAUBE, “On Acts 23”, 496. In the gospels, when the disciples see Jesus walking on the sea they thought he was a “ghost” (φάντασμα; Matt 14,26). When they first encountered the resurrected Jesus, they thought they were seeing a “spirit” (πνεῦμα; Luke 24,37.39).

⁽⁷²⁾ T.W. MANSON writes, “What they rejected was the developed doctrine of the two kingdoms with their hierarchies of good and evil spirits”, *The Servant-Messiah* (Cambridge 1953) 17, n. 3. Cf. Eph 2,2; 6,12; 1QM 10.11-12; Sib 4,11; 12,14.81-85; Jub 2,23; Hen(aeth) 18-19, 25-28.

⁽⁷³⁾ G.G. STROUMSA, “Le Couple de l’ange et de l’esprit: traditions juives et chrétiennes”, *RB* 88 (1981) 42-61; SOARDS, *Speeches*, 116.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ For ἅγιον see Luke 1,15.35.41.67; 2,25-26; 3,16.22; 4,1; 10,21; 11,13; 12,10.12; Acts 1,2.8.16; 2,4.33.38; 4,8.25.31; 5,3.32; 6,5; 7,51.55; 8,15.17.19; 9,17.31; 10,38.44.45.47; 11,15.16.24; 13,2.4.9.52; 15,8.28.29; 16,6; 19,2.6; 20,23.28; 21,11; 28,25. For μου see Luke 1,47; Acts 2,17.18; 7,59. For κυρίου see Luke 4,18; Acts 5,9; 8,39. For Ἰησοῦ see Acts 16,7.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ E.g., Luke 1,17.80; 2,27; 4,1.14; Acts 1,5; 2,4; 6,3.10; 11,12.28; 20,22.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Acts 28,9. The scribes of the Pharisees say, “perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to him”. The action of this spirit/angel focuses not on its “appearing” but on its “speaking” or communicating. This is reinforced by the dominant role of the “voice” in Acts 22, 7.9.14.18.

As for the *event* of revelation, Paul's experiences were supernatural interventions in the course of his life (i.e., against his free will). The following details illustrate this: 1) Paul's experiences most closely resemble prophetic call narratives, like those found in the Old Testament and in apocalyptic literature. This is true for the Damascus experience (Acts 22,6-16)⁽⁷⁷⁾ and the vision in the temple (Acts 22,17-21; cf. Isa 6,1-10)⁽⁷⁸⁾; 2) in call narratives in general, and in Paul's case specifically, the person is sometimes commissioned against his will (Exod 3,10-4,17; Jer 1,6-7; Acts 26,14) or chosen from birth for this task (Jer 1,5; Gal 1,15; cf. Acts 9,15); thus, this would be at odds with Sadducean views of free will; 3) these prophetic calls are often presided over by angels (Exod 3,2, cf. Acts 7,30.35; Judg 6,11-17; Hen[aeth] 71,2) or at least angels are present (Isa 6,1-13; Ezek 1,1-3,11; Hen[aeth] 14-16; Rev 10,8-11). As we saw earlier, angels were frequently regarded as playing a role in administering predestination or providential care.

Furthermore, the actual *content* of the revelation could be construed as divine interference in Paul's life. Paul was "appointed" to perform certain tasks (τέτακται; Acts 22,10; cf. 13,48 and ὃ τί σε δεῖ ποιεῖν 9,6). He was "appointed" (προεχειρίσατο; 22,14; cf. 3,20; 26,16) to know God's will and to see and hear Jesus. Furthermore, he was to be privy to God's "will" (θέλημα 22,14), which could refer to God's predetermined plan in history or salvation (Luke 11,2; cf. βουλή in Acts 2,23; 4,28)⁽⁷⁹⁾. Finally, the encounter demonstrates God's awareness and control of future events: Paul would become a witness for Jesus (Acts 22,15) and his testimony in Jerusalem would not be accepted if he remained there (22,18). Although the Sadducees might not have objected to the notion of angels carrying out the will of God in some general sense, they would have objected to their doing so in the fulfillment of a preordained eschatological program and to their interfering with the will of an autonomous human being.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, would not have been shocked that God might send a messenger to enforce his plan, since they believed in predestination to some extent. So, it was at least a possibility, however remote to their minds, that a "voice" (φωνή) had

⁽⁷⁷⁾ D. AUNE, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI 1991) 97-99.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ JOHNSON, *Acts*, 391.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ MOORE writes that Josephus "used εἰμαρμένην for what we might call the decrees of God"; *Judaism*, 458.

spoken to Paul (Acts 22,7.9.14). The voice could have been that of an angel (cf. John 12,29) or the spirit of Jesus⁽⁸⁰⁾. However, they were not willing to admit that Paul has had an encounter with the risen Jesus.

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* *

In any discussion of the Sadducees, there will always remain a certain amount of doubt due to the paucity of sources about them. Based on what data has survived, the older theory that the Sadducees rejected the extravagant beliefs about angels and spirits provides the most convincing solution to the problem of Acts 23,8. The Sadducees' reasons for rejecting these views were twofold: 1) angels were integrated into the apocalyptic world view that they rejected; and 2) angels often served as God's servants to administer predestination or providence. Thus, when Paul claimed that a heavenly being had appeared to him in a manner and with a message that appeared to be predestinarian in nature, the Sadducees were unwilling to entertain the idea that an angel or spirit had appeared to him. Certainly new theories will arise in an attempt to grapple with this issue, but to re-appropriate the words of Jesus in Luke 5,39, "the old is good *enough*".

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SUMMARY

Four major theories have emerged to explain the significance of the terms "angel" and "spirit" in Acts 23,8: the denial of the existence of angels and spirits altogether, the rejection of excessive speculation about angels; the denial of the interim state, and the denial of resurrection as an angel and spirit. The second view has the most explanatory power. This position was strengthened by showing that what the Sadducees denied was the role of angels in the administration of predestination. Thus, when a heavenly being *interfered* with Saul's plans on his way to Damascus, the Sadducees were dubious (Acts 23,9).

⁽⁸⁰⁾ As a point of reference, Josephus seems to have allowed for heavenly communications (most likely the *קול בן* in post-biblical times (*Ant.* 13.282; *BJ* 6.299. 301). Bruce thinks that the Damascus experience resembled an encounter with the *קול בן* in some regards. F.F. BRUCE, *The Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI 1986) 195.

‘153 große Fische’ (Joh 21,11) Erzählerische Ökonomie und ‘johanneischer Überstieg’ ⁽¹⁾

I. Das Problem

Zu den erstaunlichen Phänomenen der Rezeptionsgeschichte⁽²⁾ des Johannesevangeliums gehört die Tatsache, dass einige unscheinbare, auf den ersten Blick nebensächlich wirkende Bemerkungen zum Objekt einer besonders differenzierten Auslegungsgeschichte wurden. So hat etwa die Erwähnung der “153 großen Fische”, die sich bei der Offenbarung des Auferstandenen am See von Tiberias (Joh 21,1-14) im Netz der Jünger finden, eine Vielzahl von geistreichen und phantasievollen Interpretationen angeregt. Ob man sich mit Hieronymus auf griechische Zoologen beruft, die angeblich 153 Fischarten zählten⁽³⁾, mit Augustinus die Zahlen 1 bis 17 zu einer Summe addiert⁽⁴⁾ oder zum Teil mit Hilfe der Gematrie weitere komplexe Zahlenspiele unternimmt⁽⁵⁾, alle Lösungsformen haben eines ge-

⁽¹⁾ Zu diesem Begriff vgl. zuletzt K. SCHOLTISSEK, “Johannes auslegen II. Methodische, hermeneutische und einleitungswissenschaftliche Reflexionen”, *SNTUA* 25 (2000) 98-140, bes. 111-116, und die dort angegebene Literatur.

⁽²⁾ Zum Begriff “Rezeptionsgeschichte” an Stelle des häufig verwendeten “Wirkungsgeschichte” vgl. H. FRANKEMÖLLE, “Evangelium und Wirkungsgeschichte. Das Problem der Vermittlung von Methodik und Hermeneutik in neueren Auslegungen zum Matthäusevangelium”, *Salz der Erde – Licht der Welt. Exegetische Studien zum Matthäusevangelium* (Hrsg. L. OBERLINER – P. FIEDLER) (Stuttgart 1991) 31-89, bes. 63-84.

⁽³⁾ HIERONYMUS, *In Ezech.* XIV 47,6-12 (CChr.SL 75,717): *Aliunt autem qui de animantium scripsere naturis et proprie qui ἀλιευτικά — tam latino quam graeco edidere sermone — de quibus Opianicus Cilex est poeta doctissimus — centum quinquaginta tria esse genera piscium.* Zur Kritik an dieser Auslegung vgl. R.M. GRANT, “«One Hundred Fifty-Three Large Fish» (John 21:11)”, *HTR* 42 (1949) 273-275, bes. 273.

⁽⁴⁾ AUGUSTINUS, *Io.ev.tr.* CXXII 8 (CChr.SL 36,673f.). Vgl. in neuerer Zeit ähnlich M. WOJCIECHOWSKI, “Certains aspects algébriques de quelques nombres symboliques de la Bible (Gen 5; Gen 14,14; Jn 21,11)”, *BN* 23 (1984) 29-31, bes. 31.

⁽⁵⁾ Nur einige Beispiele seien genannt. So erklärt N.J. MCELENEY, “153 Great Fishes (John 21,11) – Gematriacal Atbash”, *Bib* 58 (1977) 411-417, die Zahl 153 als Ausdruck der Buchstabenfolge ιχθ (70 + 3 + 80), welche wiederum als Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεός zu lesen sei, und vermutet M. OBERWEIS, “Die Bedeutung der neutestamentlichen «Rätselzahlen» 666 (Apk 13¹¹) und 153 (Joh 21¹¹)”, *ZNW* 77

meinsam: Es lässt sich nicht beweisen, ob sie tatsächlich vom Autor/den Autoren von Joh 21⁽⁶⁾ angezielt wurden. Auch die Annahme, die exakte Zahlenangabe sei ein Zeichen der Augenzeugenschaft des Verfassers⁽⁷⁾, vermag nicht zu befriedigen. Dann lässt sich nämlich nicht erklären, warum gerade auf dieses Detail so großer Wert gelegt wird, wenn gleichzeitig z.B. weder berichtet ist, an welchem

(1986) 226-241, eine Verschlüsselung der Buchstabenfolge קנב, welche “Kana in Galiläa” bedeute, während J.A. ROMEO, “Gematria and John 21:11 – The Children of God”, *JBL* 97 (1978) 263-264, sich für die Interpretation בני אלהים, “Kinder Gottes” einsetzt. Zuletzt hat G.J. BROOKE, “4Q252 and the 153 Fish of John 21:11”, *Antikes Judentum und Frühes Christentum* (Hrsg. B. KOLLMANN et al.) (BZNW 97; Berlin – New York 1999) 253-265, über den Hinweis auf jüdische Auslegungstraditionen in Qumran wieder den Bezug von Joh 21,11 auf Ez 47 in die Diskussion eingebracht. Einen ausführlichen Überblick über die Auslegungsgeschichte von Joh 21,11 bietet zudem J. WERLITZ, “Warum gerade 153 Fische? Überlegungen zu Joh 21,11”, *Johannes aenigmaticus. Studien zum Johannesevangelium für Herbert Leroy* (Hrsg. S. SCHREIBER – A. STIMPFLE) (BU 29; Regensburg 2000) 121-137.

⁽⁶⁾ Mit dieser neutralen Bezeichnung an Stelle des häufig verwendeten Begriffes “Nachtragskapitel” soll darauf verwiesen werden, dass einerseits das Ziel der vorliegenden Studie nur ein synchron orientiertes sein kann, andererseits aber, dass die einstige “*opinio communis*” (so noch K.M. BULL, *Gemeinde zwischen Integration und Abgrenzung. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem Ort der joh Gemeinde(n) in der Geschichte des Urchristentums* [BET 24; Frankfurt/Main u.a. 1992] 11), dass es sich bei Joh 21 um ein später an das Corpus des Johannesevangeliums angehängtes Nachtragskapitel handele, in den letzten Jahren durch neue Stimmen mehr und mehr aufgebrochen ist. Zur Diskussion vgl. z.B. H. THYEN, “Entwicklungen innerhalb der johanneischen Theologie im Spiegel von Joh 21 und der Lieblingsjüngertexte des Evangeliums”, *L’Évangile de Jean. Sources, Rédaction, Théologie* (Hrsg. M. DE JONGE) (BETHL 44; Gembloux – Leuven 1977) 259-299, bes. 259-260; P.S. MINEAR, “The Original Functions of John 21”, *JBL* 102 (1983) 85-98; F. NEIRYNCK, “John 21”, *NTS* 37 (1990) 321-336; J. ZUMSTEIN, “La rédaction finale de l’évangile de Jean (à l’exemple du chapitre 21)”, *La communauté johannique et son histoire. La trajectoire de l’évangile de Jean aux deux premiers siècles* (MoBi; Genève 1990) 207-230; R.T. FORTNA, “Diachronic/Synchronic Reading John 21 and Luke 5”, *John and the Synoptics* (Hrsg. A. DENAUX) (BETHL 101; Leuven 1992) 387-399; W.S. VORSTER, “The Growth and Making of John 21”, *Speaking of Jesus. Essays on Biblical Language, Gospel Narrative and the Historical Jesus* (Hrsg. J.E. BOTHA) (NT.S 92; Leiden – Boston – Köln 1999) 199-215; P.E. SPENCER, “Narrative Echoes in John 21: Intertextual Interpretation and Intratextual Connection”, *JSNT* 75 (1999) 49-68. Unbestritten bleibt aber in jedem Fall auch bei synchroner Lektüre, dass 20,30-31 einen klaren Einschnitt bedeutet, der Kapitel 21 eine besondere Stellung einräumt.

⁽⁷⁾ So aber z.B. C.P. THIEDE, *Bibelcode und Gotteswort. Die Suche nach verschlüsselten Botschaften in der Heiligen Schrift* (Basel – Gießen 1998) 81.

Tag die erzählten Ereignisse spielen, noch geklärt ist, wie denn die Jünger — ohne Zählung! — zur genauen Angabe “153” gekommen seien. Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Problem der Rezeptionsgeschichte der Notiz von den “153 großen Fischen” scheint sich also, wie die wohl aussichtslose Suche nach einer konsensfähigen Lösung zeigt, auf autorzentrierter Ebene nicht lösen zu lassen. Die Offenheit des Textes für verschiedene Interpretationen⁽⁸⁾ verstellt die Möglichkeit der Entscheidung, welche Funktion “der” bzw. “die” historischen Autoren von Joh 21 dieser Notiz einräumten. Lösbar aber erscheint ein bei Weitem grundsätzlicheres Problem: Lässt sich vom Text selbst her zumindest die Tatsache erklären, dass es zu einer derart reichen Rezeption einer offensichtlichen Randnotiz kommen konnte? Diese Frage aber lässt sich nur in leserorientierter Perspektive — textzentriert⁽⁹⁾ — beantworten. Sie lautet dann präziser: Welche Impulse gibt der Text im Detail an seinen “Modellleser”⁽¹⁰⁾ —

(8) Zur Offenheit biblischer Texte gegen den Gedanken der “Eindeutigkeit” vgl. z.B. die grundsätzlichen Gedanken bei L. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, “Einheit und Vielheit. Gibt es eine sinnvolle Suche nach der Mitte des Alten Testaments?”, *Wieviel Systematik erlaubt die Schrift?* Auf der Suche nach einer gesamtbiblischen Theologie (Hrsg. F.-L. HOSSFELD) (QD 185; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 2001) 48-87, bes. 62-67.

(9) Vgl. z.B. U. ECO, *Die Grenzen der Interpretation* (München 21995) 168: “Zwischen der geheimnisvollen Geschichte der Hervorbringung eines Textes und der unkontrollierbaren Abdrift einer zukünftigen Interpretation ist der Text *als Text* eine beruhigende Gegenwart, ein Parameter, an den man sich halten kann.” Möchte man z.B. mit K.J. VANHOZER, “The Reader in New Testament Interpretation”, *Hearing the New Testament. Strategies for Interpretation* (Hrsg. J.B. GREEN) (Grand Rapids 1995) 301-328, bes. 308-312, zwischen “conservative” und “radical approaches” unterscheiden, so ist hiermit ein “conservative approach” eingenommen.

(10) Vgl. hierzu U. ECO, *Im Wald der Fiktionen. Sechs Streifzüge durch die Literatur* (Norton Lectures 1992-93; München 21999) 19: “eine Art Ideal-Leser, den der Text nicht nur als Mitarbeiter vorsieht, sondern sich auch zu erschaffen versucht.” Vgl. ausführlicher ID., *Lector in Fabula*. Die Mitarbeit der Interpretation an erzählenden Texten (München – Wien 1987) 61-81. Diese Theorie des Lesers kommt, wie auch ECO selbst (*Wald*, 27-28) betont, der des von W. ISEMER, *Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (München 21984) 60-61, definierten “impliziten Lesers” sehr nahe. In beiden Fällen ist dieser nicht als empirische, reale Person zu verstehen, sondern als literaturwissenschaftliche Kategorie bereits in der Struktur des zu interpretierenden Textes verankert. Aus diesem Grunde ist der im Folgenden verwendete Terminus “Leser” nicht im Sinne eines Maskulinums zu verstehen, sondern als neutrale Bezeichnung einer textimmanenten Größe. Deswegen erscheint auch eine geschlechtsspezifische Differenzierung (Leser – Leserin) nicht sinnvoll.

im Folgenden kurz “Leser” —, die dann eventuell Verbindungen zur tatsächlichen Vielfalt der Rezeptionsgeschichte herstellen lassen?

II. Das Beispiel: Eine Lektüre von Joh 21,1-14

1. Zu Form und Struktur von Joh 21,1-14⁽¹¹⁾

Auch wenn die Stelle Joh 21,1-14 als eingebettet in den größeren Kontext Joh 21 zu verstehen ist und sich eine Reihe von Verbindungslinien zum zweiten Teil des Kapitels aufzeigen lassen⁽¹²⁾, kann die Szene aufgrund der durch die VV. 1 und 14 gebildeten Inklusion (φανερῶ – πάλιν/τρίτον – Ἰησοῦς – τοῖς μαθηταῖς – οὕτως/τοῦτο) zumindest als Teileinheit des größeren Ganzen Joh 21 aufgefasst werden. Innerhalb des Rahmens 21,1 und 14 aber wird es schwierig, sichere Trennlinien zu ziehen. Eine Zäsur auf inhaltlicher Ebene ergibt sich durch die Opposition von “Nacht” (Jünger allein – erfolgloses Fischen) und “Morgen” (Erscheinen Jesu – großer Fangerfolg) zwischen den VV. 3 und 4. Eine zweite lässt sich aufgrund des Gegenübers von “See” und “Land” zwischen den VV. 8 und 9 ausmachen. Von diesen beiden Einschnitten scheint zumindest dann der zweite aus formalen Gründen tiefer zu gehen, wenn man die VV. 2-8 insgesamt als Erzählung eines “wunderbaren Fischfangs”, 9-13 aber als “Mahlszene” einordnet⁽¹³⁾. Ausgerechnet der im Zusammenhang besonders interessierende V. 11 aber macht bei einer derartigen Einteilung Probleme. Ist er als “Demonstration des Wunders”⁽¹⁴⁾ aufzufassen? Dann wäre er noch in die Geschichte des wunderbaren Fischfanges einzuordnen, als solche aber eine Doppelung zur Aussage V. 6, dass das Netz so voller Fische war, dass

⁽¹¹⁾ Zur Bedeutung formaler Beobachtungen am Text für dessen leserorientierte Interpretation vgl. die grundsätzlichen Gedanken in meinem Aufsatz “Formkritik und Leserrezeption. Ein Beitrag zur Methodendiskussion am Beispiel Mk 9,14-29”, *Bib* 82 (2001) 496-514, bes. 496-500.

⁽¹²⁾ Besonders T. WIARDA, “John 21.1-23: Narrative Unity and Its Implications”, *JSNT* 46 (1992) 53-71, zeigt eindrucksvoll Verbindungslinien innerhalb des Gesamtkapitels auf.

⁽¹³⁾ Zur Einteilung der Szene in “Wundergeschichte” und “Mahlszene” vgl. F.F. SEGOVIA, “The Final Farewell of Jesus: A Reading of John 20:30-21:25”, *Sem* 53 (1991) 167-190, bes. 176.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Vgl. G. THEIBEN, *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten*. Ein Beitrag zur formgeschichtlichen Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien (StNT 8; Gütersloh 1990) 76.

die Jünger es nicht einholen konnten⁽¹⁵⁾. Auch die Reaktion des Petrus in V. 7 passt nicht zu einer Erzählung mit dem (einzigen) Mittelpunkt eines wunderbaren Fischfangs. Vor allem aber die Betonung des Verbums $\phi\alpha\upsilon\epsilon\pi\acute{o}\omega$ im Rahmen zeigt, dass eine formale Beschreibung der Szene aufgrund der Bezeichnungen "Wundergeschichte" + "Mahlszene" nicht ausreicht, um die Erzählung als Ganzes zu fassen. Entscheidend ist vielmehr das Moment der "Offenbarung". Die Szene als Ganzes will also im Sinne einer Epiphanie verstanden werden. Als solche aber weist sie eine ganz entscheidende Besonderheit auf: Es fehlt in ihr das zentrale Motiv eines Wortes, in dem sich der Offenbarte zu erkennen gibt. An dessen Stelle rückt nun das Bekenntnis des "Jüngers, den Jesus liebte" (LJ) in V. 7 mit der anschließenden Reaktion des Petrus, sowie die eigenartige Notiz in V. 12b, dass die Jünger nicht zu fragen wagten, wer "er" sei, da sie doch wussten, dass es der "Herr" war. Für die Gliederung des Textes ergibt sich somit Folgendes:

- 21,1 *Rahmenteil 1: Verweis auf Offenbarungscharakter der Szene*
- 21,2-3 Die Jünger allein
- 21,4-8 Die Offenbarung Jesu im wunderbaren Fischfang
- 21,9-13 Die Offenbarung Jesu in der Mahlszene
- 21,14 *Rahmenteil 2: Verweis auf Offenbarungscharakter der Szene*

2. Ein "Modell-Lektürevorgang" von Joh 21,1-14

a) Rahmenteil 1: Joh 21,1

Dass Joh 20,30-31 Abschlusscharakter besitzt, ist schon seit langer Zeit erkannt⁽¹⁶⁾. Im Lektürevorgang hat dies die Auswirkung, dass der Neueinsatz mit 21,1 auf den Leser wie eine Überraschung wirken muss. Mit 20,30-31 scheint ja alles bereits gesagt, was notwendig war, um das Ziel des johanneischen Erzählers zu erreichen⁽¹⁷⁾, seine Leser zum Glauben an Jesus, den Messias und Sohn

⁽¹⁵⁾ Eine solche Doppelung bleibt eigenartigerweise auch noch in der hypothetischen Quellenrekonstruktion von R.T. FORTNA, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor*. From Narrative Source to Present Gospel (Philadelphia 1988) 68-69, erhalten.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Dies muss aber, wie auch R. BAUCKHAM, "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author", *The Johannine Writings*. A Sheffield Reader (Hrsg. S.E. PORTER – C.A. EVANS) (The Biblical Seminar 32; Sheffield 1995) 46-68, bes. 52, betont, nicht unbedingt den Schluss des gesamten Evangeliums bedeuten.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Auch der "Erzähler" ist keine Gestalt aus Fleisch und Blut, sondern eine Funktion des Textes. Er lässt sich definieren als "die Stimme, die die Geschichte

Gottes und damit zum (ewigen) Leben in seinem Namen zu führen. Wenn der Erzähler jetzt noch einmal einsetzt, müssen dafür gute Gründe bestehen, die der Leser noch nicht erraten kann⁽¹⁸⁾. Immerhin: Es geht um eine erneute Offenbarung Jesu, und es ist — unmotiviert — ein abrupter Ortswechsel von der hinter “verschlossenen Türen” (20,19.26) spielenden Szene in Jerusalem an den bereits im 6. Kapitel begegnenden See von Tiberias vorausgesetzt⁽¹⁹⁾. Dass die Jünger sich jetzt dort aufhalten, signalisiert dem Leser, dass sie inzwischen — eine das Geschehen mit dem 20. Kapitel verbindende konkrete Zeitangabe fehlt⁽²⁰⁾ — das Jerusalemer Versteck aus welchen Gründen auch immer verlassen haben.

b) Joh 21,2-3

Die nun erfolgende Nennung von Namen schafft zumindest teilweise Verbindungen zu zentralen Stellen aus dem Rest des Evangeliums. Interessant ist v.a. die Kombination der ersten drei. Während Natanaël und Thomas für das erste und das letzte adäquate Bekenntnis eines Jesusjüngers im Johannesevangelium (1,49: “der Sohn Gottes, der König Israels”; 20,28: “mein Herr und mein Gott”) stehen und damit geradezu eine textliche Klammer um das Evangelium bilden, tauchte der vorangestellte Simon Petrus zwar bereits mehrfach auf, zuletzt aber mit einer dreimaligen Verleugnung (18,15-19.25-27), der auch bei der Entdeckung des leeren Grabes (20,1-10) kein Bekenntnis gegenübersteht. Einen Leser *nur* des Johannesevangeliums dürfte dagegen die Erwähnung der Zebedaiden⁽²¹⁾ über-

erzählt.” Vgl. weiterführend z.B. R.A. CULPEPPER, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel. A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia 31989) 17, und die dort angeführte Literatur.

⁽¹⁸⁾ L. HARTMAN, “An Attempt at a Text-Centered Exegesis of John 21”, *Text-Centered New Testament Studies. Text-Theoretical Essays on Early Jewish and Early Christian Literature* (Hrsg. D. HELLHOLM) (WUNT 102; Tübingen 1997) 69-87, bes. 70, macht die zusätzliche Beobachtung, dass vor dem Hintergrund der Tatsache, dass bereits in Kapitel 20 Botschaften vermittelt wurden, die auch für Leser späterer Generationen von bleibender Bedeutung seien, Ähnliches nun auch für Kapitel 21 erwartet würde.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Wie sehr diese Leerstelle zu Spekulationen anregt, zeigt deutlich der Kommentar zur Stelle von D.A. CARSON, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester – Grand Rapids 1991) 668.

⁽²⁰⁾ Die unbestimmte Übergangspartikel μετὰ ταῦτα ist dem Leser des Johannesevangeliums bereits aus 3,22; 5,1; 6,1 und 7,1 bekannt.

⁽²¹⁾ Dass es zwei sind, lässt sich aus dem Text Johannesevangelium allein nicht erschließen. Vor diesem Hintergrund dürften Spekulationen über eine

raschen⁽²²⁾, welche bisher nicht begegneten. Dass daneben zwei weitere Jünger nur erwähnt werden, zeigt an, dass sich das Interesse auf die Ersten konzentrieren wird, öffnet aber gleichzeitig die Szene. Der Erzähler macht damit klar, dass das Berichtete in Wirklichkeit detailreicher als geschildert ist, dass die nicht angegebenen Einzelheiten — wie die Namen der weiteren Jünger — aber nicht von Bedeutung für das Weitere sind. Die Aussage des Petrus in V. 3 schließlich signalisiert dem Leser, dass dieser inzwischen eine gewisse Vorrangstellung unter den Jüngern einnimmt. Er ergreift die Initiative, der die anderen folgen. Die Tätigkeit selbst aber muss den Leser⁽²³⁾ befremden. Nach dem Geschilderten v.a. über die Entsprechung der Aussendung der Jünger mit der Jesu (20,21-23) stellt sich die Frage, warum die Jünger sich jetzt dem Fischen zuwenden und wozu eine vor dem Hintergrund des Erzählten derart "banal" wirkende Tätigkeit noch geschildert werden müsste⁽²⁴⁾. Das Folgende ist in äußerster Knappheit berichtet. Dies wiederum zeigt dem Leser, dass der Erzähler sich nicht für die vordergründigen Details interessiert, woher die Jünger nun das vorher nie erwähnte Boot und die zum Fischen notwendigen Geräte haben. Entscheidend ist vielmehr der Zielpunkt dieser ersten Einheit: "In jener (nicht näher spezifizierten) Nacht fingen sie nichts." Gerade weil nicht bekannt wird, um welche konkrete Nacht es sich hier handelt, gleichzeitig der Begriff im Verlauf des Johannesevangelium theologisch aufgeladen (vgl. v.a. 3,2; 9,4; 11,9-10; 13,30) wurde, kann der Leser ahnen, dass die Angabe mehr als rein chronologische Funktion besitzen muss.

mögliche Symbolik der "Siebenzahl" der in V. 2 erwähnten Jünger (vgl. z.B. E. RUCKSTUHL, "Zur Aussage und Botschaft von Joh 21", *Jesus im Horizont der Evangelien* (SBAB 3; Stuttgart 1988) 327-353, bes. 331) am Text Joh 21,2 vorbeigehen, wo ja gar nicht von sieben Jüngern die Rede ist.

(²²) Dieser Effekt stellt sich dagegen nicht bei einem "Modellleser" der gesamten Bibel bzw. der vier kanonischen Evangelien ein.

(²³) Auch hier kann zwischen einem Modellleser des Johannesevangeliums und einem solchen der gesamten Bibel bzw. der vier kanonischen Evangelien unterschieden werden. Während Ersterer über eine vergangene Tätigkeit der Jünger als Fischer (v.a. bei Natanaël aus Kana scheint dies noch dazu recht ungewöhnlich) nicht informiert ist, weiß es Letzterer aus den Berichten der drei Synoptiker. Auch im zweiten Fall muss der Leser überrascht sein, dass die Jünger in ihre doch aufgrund der Begegnung mit Jesus aufgegebenen alte Tätigkeit zurückkehren.

(²⁴) Eben deshalb geht der Hinweis von G.R. BEASLEY-MURRAY, *John* (WBC 36; Waco 1987) 399, die Jünger müssten ja schließlich etwas essen, an der eigentlichen Problematik vorbei.

Das Gegensatzpaar “Tag und Nacht” steht johanneisch in Konnotation zum Gedanken der Sendungstätigkeit (Jesu) (9,4), gleichzeitig verbindet sich der Gedanke der “Nacht” mit “Dunkelheit”, während Jesus als “Licht der Welt (8,12; 9,5) bezeichnet wird⁽²⁵⁾. Beim Leser, der bereits vermutet, dass die Tätigkeit der Jünger als Fischer nicht dem entspricht, wozu sie Jesus in 20,21 beauftragt hat, nämlich zu einer der seinigen entsprechenden Aussendung, wird dies bestätigt. Dass in einer derartigen Nacht der Fangenfolg ausbleiben muss⁽²⁶⁾, ist keine Überraschung.

c) Joh 21,4-8

Wenn der Begriff der “Nacht” so verstanden wird wie oben geschildert, dann muss die erneute Zeitangabe “am Morgen” (V. 4) einen Umschwung andeuten. Dass dieser mit dem auferstandenen Jesus zusammenhängen wird, kann der Leser aufgrund von 21,1 vermuten. V. 4 ist besonders wichtig für das Verhältnis des Lesers zu den Jüngern als Charakteren der erzählten Welt. Während ihm über den Erzähler klar gemacht wird, dass Jesus am Ufer steht, wissen das die Jünger nicht. Der Leser ist diesen also um eine entscheidende Information überlegen⁽²⁷⁾. Warum die Jünger aber Jesus nicht erkennen, kann auch er nur vermuten. So entsteht eine Offenheit⁽²⁸⁾, die der Szene einen Hauch traumhafter Unwirklichkeit verleiht. Gleichzeitig stellt sich — auch aufgrund von 21,1 — die Erwartung ein, dass das entscheidende Thema des Folgenden darin liegen wird, wie die Jünger zur Erkenntnis Jesu kommen werden. Die Verse 5-6 schließlich konfrontieren den Leser mit einer Reihe von Problemen. Einerseits erkennen die Jünger Jesus auch nach

⁽²⁵⁾ Zur Metaphorik von “Licht” und “Finsternis” im Johannesevangelium vgl. vertiefend O. SCHWANKL, *Licht und Finsternis*. Ein metaphorisches Paradigma in den johanneischen Schriften (Herders Biblische Studien 5; Freiburg u.a. 1995).

⁽²⁶⁾ Für einen Modellleser des gesamten Vierevangelienkanons bzw. der christlichen Bibel wird dabei natürlich auch die Parallele Lk 5,5 evoziert, die die beschriebene Erwartung noch verstärkt.

⁽²⁷⁾ Ich halte dagegen den Gedanken, dass es dem Leser unbegreiflich sein müsse, warum die Jünger Jesus nicht wiedererkennen (z.B. C. DIETZFELBINGER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* [ZBK; Zürich 2001] II, 352), für nicht ganz treffend. Dem Leser ist ja spätestens seit der Begegnung des Auferstandenen mit Maria von Magdala (20,11-18) bekannt, dass dieser auf geheimnisvolle Weise in seiner Identität unerkant bleiben kann.

⁽²⁸⁾ Nur in Anmerkung sei auf die zusätzliche Beobachtung verwiesen, dass der Text an keiner Stelle darüber reflektiert, wie denn die Kommunikation über die große Entfernung vom Ufer zum See überhaupt möglich wäre.

seiner Anrede als *παῖδια* nicht⁽²⁹⁾, andererseits befolgen sie ohne Zögern seinen Befehl, das Netz auf der rechten Seite auszuwerfen. Bereits die vorausgehende Frage Jesu (V. 5) aber ist für mehrere Interpretationen offen. Aufgrund der Semantik des Begriffs *προσφάγιον* (Speise – Fisch) kann sie als “Habt ihr etwas zu essen?” oder “Habt ihr Fisch?” übersetzt werden. Auf der Kommunikationsebene zwischen den Charakteren der erzählten Welt begründet sie das “Nein” der Jünger und führt zur Aufforderung, es erneut zu versuchen. Der Erzähler macht damit klar, dass es im Moment allein auf die völlige Umkehrung von totalem Fehlschlag hin zu absolutem Fangerfolg ankommt. Auf diesem Hintergrund soll der Leser dann auch das Bekenntnis in V. 7a erklären. Durch das offensichtliche Wunder⁽³⁰⁾ des Fischfangs erweist sich Jesus als “der Herr”. Das Zeichen rückt somit gegenüber dem Bekenntnis in den Hintergrund. Dass es “der Jünger, den Jesus liebte” ist, der Jesus als solchen erkennt, ist, auch wenn er in der Aufzählung von V. 2 nicht namentlich genannt wurde⁽³¹⁾, nicht wirklich überraschend, zu sehr ist er dem Leser als der vorbildliche Jünger vorgestellt worden, der Jesus am nächsten steht. Eigenartig dagegen ist, dass er seine offensichtlich aufgrund des wunderbaren Fangerfolges erreichte⁽³²⁾ Erkenntnis, dass es “der Herr” sei, offensichtlich nur dem Petrus mitteilt, welcher damit wieder in den Mittelpunkt der Handlung rückt. Die Unmittelbarkeit der Reaktion des Petrus ruft beim Leser den Eindruck hervor, dieser handle nun ganz spontan, ohne nachdenken zu müssen, völlig von seinem Gefühl beherrscht. Die Szene gerät spürbar in Bewegung. Dass dabei in knapper Form erzählt wird, dass Petrus sich vor dem Sprung⁽³³⁾ noch gegürtet habe, weil er nackt war, lässt dagegen stutzen. Auch wenn man der klugen Erklärung von R.E. BROWN folgen

⁽²⁹⁾ Eine derartige Anrede begegnet sonst im Johannesevangelium nicht. Erinnert sei aber an die Bezeichnung der Jünger als *τεκνία* in 13,33. Interessant ist auch die Begegnung des Auferweckten mit Maria von Magdala, die ihn aufgrund der Anrede “Maria” erkennt (20,16).

⁽³⁰⁾ Auch die Tatsache, dass es sich um ein Wunder handelt und der Umschlag zum Gelingen der Aktion auf Jesus zurückzuführen sei, muss vom Leser selbstständig erschlossen werden, da der Erzähler das Geschilderte an keiner Stelle als “Zeichen” bzw. “Wunder” deutet.

⁽³¹⁾ Die Spekulation, wer von den in V. 2 Aufgezählten es wohl sein könne, entzündet sich natürlich gerade an dieser Stelle. Aufgrund des dortigen Zusatzes “und zwei andere” aber wird eine Entscheidung in dieser Frage unmöglich bleiben.

⁽³²⁾ Der Text sagt nicht, woher der LJ diese Erkenntnis hat, der Leser muss sie vielmehr erschließen.

⁽³³⁾ Auch das Verbum *βάλλω* vermittelt den Eindruck großer Dynamik.

möchte, der das Verbum διαζώννυμι im Sinne von “Hochbinden eines Gewandes” versteht und die Gesamtszene dahingehend interpretiert, dass Petrus seinen Umhang, unter dem er nackt ist, hochbindet, um beim Schwimmen Beinfreiheit zu haben⁽³⁴⁾, entsteht erneut das Problem, warum auf dieses Detail solch großer Wert gelegt wird, während andere Einzelheiten offensichtlich unter den Tisch fallen⁽³⁵⁾. Gleichzeitig entsteht die Erwartung, Petrus, der im Verlauf der Erzählung ja schon als der “Führende” dargestellt wurde, werde auch jetzt als Erster Jesus erreichen, um dann wohl vor ihm niederzufallen und eventuell seinen Glauben zu bekennen. Doch diese Annahme wird enttäuscht. Der schnellen Bewegung des Petrus steht in V. 8 die offensichtlich schwerfällige der anderen Jünger im Boot gegenüber. Diese (mangelnde) Reaktion muss dem Leser unerklärlich erscheinen. Die anderen Jünger haben die Situation offensichtlich noch nicht verstanden, sie sind immer noch auf das “Fischen” und den “Fang” konzentriert⁽³⁶⁾.

d) Joh 21,9-13

V. 9 bildet durch die Erwähnung des “Landes” einen deutlichen Einschnitt. Die Jünger sind nun bei Jesus angelangt. Die bewegte Szene kommt zur Ruhe. Überraschenderweise aber ist weiterhin nicht von Petrus die Rede. Dieser wirkt regelrecht “abgetaucht”. Gleichzeitig weckt die Konzentration nicht auf Jesus, sondern auf das Kohlenfeuer und die darauf liegenden Speisen von Fisch und Brot Assoziationen an johanneische Texte, die dem Leser bereits bekannt sind. Ein Kohlenfeuer (ἀνθρακιά) spielt schon in der Szene eine Rolle, in der Petrus Jesus verleugnet (18,28). Dass nun dasselbe Wort in einer Erzählung, in der Petrus bereits mehrfach im Zentrum des Geschehens stand, wieder begegnet, kann als Signal gewertet werden, dass Petrus im Folgenden mit einer Situation konfrontiert werden wird, die der damaligen parallel sein wird. Petrus

⁽³⁴⁾ R.E. BROWN, *The Gospel according to John* (AB 29.2; Garden City 1970) II, 1072.

⁽³⁵⁾ Auch diese Szene wurde äußerst unterschiedlich interpretiert. Häufig wird vermutet, dass Petrus seinem “Herrn” aus religiösen Gründen nicht nackt unter die Augen treten wolle. Zumindest originell ist die Idee von D.H. GEE, “Why Did Peter Spring Into the Sea (John 21:7)”, *JThS N.S.* 40 (1989) 481-489, Petrus habe aus Scham wegen seiner Verleugnung Jesus, seinem “Herrn”, nicht unter die Augen treten wollen und habe im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes versucht, vor ihm “unterzutauchen”.

⁽³⁶⁾ Nur in Anmerkung sei darauf verwiesen, dass nun — wie Petrus — auch der LJ plötzlich eigenartigerweise keine Rolle mehr spielt.

selbst ist aber (noch) verschwunden. Brot und Fisch⁽³⁷⁾ dagegen erinnern an die Speisung der 5000, die ebenfalls am See von Tiberias lokalisiert war (6,1). Wenn damit eine weitere Mahlszene evoziert wird, stellt sich aber gleichzeitig die Frage, welchen Sinn dann der Fischfang hat, wenn bereits Brot und Fisch da sind. Aus mehreren Gründen kann der Leser zumindest vermuten, dass die zu erwartende Speisung nicht oberflächlich der Sättigung der Jünger dienen kann. Dafür spricht allein schon der Rahmen, der die Szene in den Kontext der Offenbarung des Auferweckten gestellt hat. Aber auch aufgrund des eingespielten Bezugs zu Kapitel 6 muss klar werden, dass es keinesfalls um Oberflächliches, Vordergründiges gehen kann. Bereits dort wurde ja der Leser ebenfalls über das Bild des Brotes zu tieferem christologischen und schließlich sakramentalen Verständnis geführt⁽³⁸⁾. Vor diesem Hintergrund muss der folgende Satz geradezu banal wirken, ist doch nicht denkbar, dass Jesus, der erst jetzt ins Zentrum des Erzählten rückt, auf den Fangerfolg zurückweist, weil die bereits vorhandenen Fische und das Brot nicht ausreichen. Immerhin aber stellt V. 10 eine Verbindung zwischen Fischfang und zu erwartender Speisung her, vernetzt beides.

Der für die Untersuchung besonders interessante V. 11 steht damit in einem für Leserfragen und unterschiedliche Antworten ungeheuer offenen Kontext. Unerklärt ist sowohl das Verschwinden des Petrus wie auch die Funktion von Brot und Fisch. Fraglich ist, worin die Bedeutung des großen Fischfangs besteht, wenn er offensichtlich nur beim LJ, der erstaunlicherweise wie Petrus aus dem Blickfeld verschwunden ist, zur Erkenntnis des Herrn geführt hat. Die angedeutete Offenheit verschärft sich aber noch mehr, als Petrus in V. 11 geradezu aus dem Nichts "auftaucht" (wörtlich ἀναβαίνω)⁽³⁹⁾ und ohne ein Wort — of-

⁽³⁷⁾ In der Erzählung begegnen mindestens zwei verschiedene Begriffe für "Fisch": ἰχθύς, ὀψάριον (und eventuell προσφάγιον). Der Bezug auf Joh 6 entsteht v.a. aufgrund des zweiten. Vgl. 6,9.11. Eine symbolische Interpretation dieser Mehrdeutigkeit bietet A. PITTA, "Ichthys e opsarion in Gv 21,1-14: sem-plice variazione lessicale o differenza con valore simbolico?", *Bib* 71 (1990) 348-364.

⁽³⁸⁾ Zu diesen Aussagen vertiefend vgl. K. SCHOLTISSEK, "Die Brotrede in Joh 6,1-71. Exegetische Beobachtungen zu ihrem johanneischen Profil", *ZKTh* 123 (2001) 35-55.

⁽³⁹⁾ Der Begriff lässt wiederum mehrere Interpretationen zu. Entweder muss vermutet werden, dass Petrus erst jetzt aus dem Wasser zum Ufer hinaufsteigt (vgl. z.B. J. KÜGLER, *Der Jünger, den Jesus liebte*. Literarische, theologische und historische Untersuchungen zu einer Schlüsselgestalt johanneischer Theologie und Geschichte. Mit einem Exkurs über die Brotrede in Joh 6 [SBB 16; Stuttgart

fensichtlich in Reaktion auf den Befehl Jesu in V. 10 — das Netz an Land zieht. Wie er dies schaffen kann — noch in V. 6 wurde erzählt, dass das Netz allen Jüngern zu schwer war, um es einzuholen — interessiert offensichtlich nicht. All diese Unebenheiten und offenen Fragen, die evozierten Kontexte zwingen den Leser geradezu dazu, von einer rein vordergründigen Interpretation des Erzählten zu einer symbolischen Auslegung durchzustoßen. Ganz besonders stören muss sich der Leser nun aber an der Erwähnung der “153 großen Fische”. Wie gezeigt, hat der Kontext eine Vielzahl von Details ungeklärt, mehrere Fragen offen gelassen, nun aber interessiert er sich für eine Einzelheit, die — würde sie als Bestätigung des großen Fanges aufgefasst —, redundant wäre, eine Doppelung zu V. 6 (“Netz voller Fische”) bilden würde⁽⁴⁰⁾. Bei der Erwähnung der “153 großen Fische” handelt es sich somit um einen offensichtlichen Verstoß gegen die “Konvention erzählerischer Ökonomie”⁽⁴¹⁾. Käme es dem Erzähler wirklich darauf an, einen getreu an Historischem interessierten Bericht abzuliefern, hätte er auch auf andere Einzelheiten Wert gelegt, z.B. darauf, woher denn die Zahl 153 bekannt sei, wenn gleichzeitig offensichtlich nicht einmal das Netz ausgeleert wurde. Gerade dieses Zusammentreffen und die Tatsache, dass die hier begegnende nicht die erste sinnbildlich zu interpretierende Zahl im Johannesevangelium wäre⁽⁴²⁾, zwingt den Leser geradezu zum Überstieg in eine symbolische Deutung der “153 Fische”. Der Text aber gibt in diesem Fall keinerlei Stütze, keinen Anhaltspunkt für eine eindeutige Interpretation. Lösungen müssen also von außen in den Text eingetragen werden. Die Vielfalt der Möglichkeiten — aufgrund der Rolle des Petrus, der abschließenden, gewichtigen Stellung des Textes und Bildern aus anderen Evangelien legen sich christologische, aber auch ekklesiologische Deutungen besonders nahe — führt zur tatsächlichen Fülle historisch-empirischer Textrezeption(en). Gerade für einen Modellleser des gesamten Kanons, dem

1988] 383-384) oder dass er — seine Ankunft wäre dann ausgeblendet —, ins Boot einsteigt, wie z.B. E. HAENCHEN, *Das Johannesevangelium*. Ein Kommentar aus den nachgelassenen Manuskripten (Hrsg. U. BUSSE) (Tübingen 1980) 586-587, interpretiert.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Zur Bedeutung von Doppelungen für die Leserlenkung vgl. meinen Aufsatz “Literarkritik und Leserrezeption. Ein Beitrag zur Methodendiskussion am Beispiel Joh 3,22-4,3”, *Bib* 83 (2002) 175-192.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Vgl. hierzu v.a. G. LEECH, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London – New York 1995) 67-68.

⁽⁴²⁾ Weitere Beispiele im Teil 3.

z.B. das Bild von "Menschenfischern" (Mk 1,17 par) bekannt ist, legt sich ja auch in der für den Erzählfluss vordergründig überflüssig wirkenden⁽⁴³⁾ Bemerkung, dass das Netz nicht "zerriss", eine symbolische Deutung auf die "Kirche" nahe. Dass diese wiederum auf die Interpretation der "153 Fische" zurückwirkt, ist offensichtlich.

Die Notwendigkeit zum "johanneischen Überstieg" im Falle von V. 11 verstärkt sich aber noch einmal mit V. 12, der auffällig wenig Bezug zum Vorangegangenen aufweist. Die gefangenen Fische spielen nun plötzlich überhaupt keine Rolle mehr, ebensowenig Petrus oder gar die Zahl der Fische. Vielmehr wird jetzt klar gemacht, dass die Jünger nun auf der gleichen Erkenntnisebene wie der Leser angekommen sind. Zu erschließen aber ist, woher diese plötzliche Erkenntnis kommt. Am wunderbaren Fang allein kann sie offensichtlich nicht hängen, Auslöser scheint vielmehr das simple "Kommt und esst" zu sein. Gleichzeitig rückt der Erzähler Jesus in das Licht unbegreiflicher Entzogenheit. Er ist derselbe wie vorher und ist es doch nicht. Was der so geschilderte Auferstandene in der Speisung — offensichtlich isst er selbst nicht mit⁽⁴⁴⁾ — seiner "Kindlein" tut, muss somit mehr sein als ein vordergründiges "Austeilen von Nahrungsmitteln." Auch hier öffnet sich der Text für verschiedene Deutungen. Ist eine Verbindung zu Jesus als dem wahren "Brot des Lebens" hergestellt? Soll gezeigt werden, dass die Jünger jede allzu weltliche Sorge zurückstellen können, da sie vom Auferstandenen auf wunderbare Weise gestärkt werden? Oder spielt der Gedanke der Begegnung mit dem Auferstandenen in der eucharistischen Feier — trotz der Erwähnung des Fisches — eine Rolle?⁽⁴⁵⁾ Die Offenheit der Szene lässt jede der genannten Möglichkeiten — eventuell auch in Verbindung untereinander — zu, eine eindeutige Entscheidung ist nicht möglich.

e) Rahmenteil 2: Joh 21,14

So ist der Leser im Schluss der kurzen Einheit noch immer mit einer Reihe von Fragen beschäftigt. Das Rätsel um V. 11 hat sich nicht lösen lassen. Die Rolle des Petrus bleibt ebenso ungeklärt wie die

⁽⁴³⁾ So verweist z.B. RUCKSTUHL, "Aussage", 334, darauf, dass, ginge es nur um Veranschaulichung des Wunders, dieses durch ein Zerreißen des Netzes noch deutlicher geworden wäre.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Auch dies aber hat der Leser zu erschließen!

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Dieser Bezug wird bei einigen Textzeugen ganz offensichtlich, die an Stelle von καὶ δίδωσιν die möglicherweise aus dem Diatessaron eingedrungene Lesart εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν bzw. ihre lateinischen und syrischen Äquivalente bezeugen (D f r^l vg^{ms} sy^{sin}).

Frage nach der Bedeutung der hier erzählten Speisung. V. 14 stellt das Erzählte wiederum in den Kontext der “Offenbarung” und schafft (“zum dritten Mal”) eine Beziehung zu den weiteren Erscheinungsgeschichten aus dem 20. Kapitel⁽⁴⁶⁾. Dies zwingt den Leser zur Neuevaluation des Ganzen: Jesus hat sich im Wunder und in der Speisung seiner Jünger als der auch nach seinem Tod bleibende “Herr” offenbart, von dem seine Jünger in geheimnisvoller Weise gespeist werden, ohne den sie sich aber in einer Nacht befinden, die jeglichen Erfolg unmöglich macht. Alles Erzählte muss unter diesem Aspekt interpretiert werden⁽⁴⁷⁾. Wenn Jesus sich aber als Herr offenbart hat, bleibt sowohl die Frage nach der Rolle des Petrus wie die nach der Funktion von V. 11 offen. Während die Erstere im Kommenden (VV. 15-23) geklärt werden wird, bleibt Letztere offen.

V. 11 ist also aus verschiedenen Gründen geradezu prädestiniert dafür, den Leser zu immer neuem Nachdenken herauszufordern.

Innerhalb einer Geschichte, die nach 20,30-31 den Anspruch stellt, Bedeutsames zu erzählen, das über die Erkenntnis Jesus als des “Sohnes Gottes” und “Messias” hinaus wichtig ist, fällt die Aussage über die “153 Fische” aus der Rolle:

(1) Als reine Bestätigung der Größe des Fanges betrachtet, stellt sie eine überflüssig erscheinende Doppelung zu V. 6 dar.

(2) V. 11 zwingt aufgrund einer schwachen Verzahnung mit dem Kontext den Leser zur “Füllung” erzählerischer Leerstellen.

(3) In einer Erzählung voller Details, die sich symbolisch verstehen lassen, begegnet eine Zahl, die keine eindeutige Auflösung in dieser Richtung erlaubt.

(4) Die Erzählung als Ganze mutet wie eine Kollage an, die einerseits überflüssig erscheinende Details fokussiert, andererseits aber gleichzeitig für eine vordergründige Logik bedeutsame Einzelheiten auslässt. Damit schafft sie eine geradezu surrealistisch anmutende Traumatosphäre⁽⁴⁸⁾. Besonders die Erwähnung der “153 großen Fische”, aber auch andere wie das “Gürten” des Petrus, das

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Dies muss keinen Widerspruch zur Zahl der bisher im Johannes-evangelium berichteten Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen bedeuten, wenn man die Begegnung mit Maria von Magdala (20,11-18) nicht als Erscheinung *vor den Jüngern* zählt.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Systematisch formuliert geht es um die notwendige Verankerung jeder Ekklesiologie im Christusgeheimnis.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Vgl. ähnlich HARTMAN, “Attempt”, 75, der von einer “dream-like atmosphere” spricht.

Nichtzerreißen des Netzes usw., verstoßen somit eindeutig gegen die Konvention erzählerischer Ökonomie und zwingen den Leser zur dauernden Neuvaluation des Rezipierten.

III. Übertrag: Die Bedeutung des Beobachteten für das Johannesevangelium

Was bedeuten die Beobachtungen an Joh 21 für die Interpretation des Johannesevangeliums? Bereits eine oberflächliche Durchsicht zeigt, dass ähnliche, nicht immer gleich deutliche Verstöße gegen das "Prinzip erzählerischer Ökonomie" im Johannesevangelium geradezu auf Schritt und Tritt begegnen. Nur einige davon seien angeführt⁽⁴⁹⁾:

(1) Von Nikodemus, dem "führenden Mann" der "Juden", wird in Joh 3,2 berichtet, dass er Jesus "bei Nacht" besucht habe. Diese Notiz wirkt vor allem dann auffällig, wenn man bedenkt, dass weder ein genauer Ort des Zusammentreffens erwähnt wird, noch erzählt ist, um die Nacht *welchen Tages* es sich gehandelt haben mag. Von rein chronologischem Standpunkt her ist das Wörtchen νυκτός deswegen überflüssig⁽⁵⁰⁾. Hier gibt der Text selbst eine Möglichkeit der Deutung an

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Eine erschöpfende Behandlung dieses Themas würde den Umfang einer Monographie erfordern. In vielen Fällen lassen sich die hier beschriebenen Phänomene an Parenthesen des Johannesevangeliums festmachen. Diese sind in ihrem Gesamt bereits erfasst, grammatikalisch und stilistisch beschrieben von G. VAN BELLE, *Les Parenthèses dans l'Évangile de Jean*. Aperçu historique et classification. Texte grec de Jean (Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia 11; Leuven 1985).

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Wenig sinnvoll sind deswegen Interpretationen, die den Begriff der "Nacht" mit einer angeblichen Vorliebe "der" Rabbinen für nächtliches Studium in Verbindung bringen. Vgl. z.B. J. BECKER, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (ÖTBK 4.1; Gütersloh – Würzburg 1991) I, 157; R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HThK 4.1; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1992) I, 380. Neben dem Problem der Darstellung lassen sich auch historische Einwände gegen diese Interpretation, die auf Bill., II, 419-420, zurückgehen dürfte, anführen. So sind die dort angegebenen Texte, die davon sprechen, dass "*manche* Diskussion der Gelehrten *bis in die Nacht* [Herv. d. Vf.] hinein" dauerte, als Parallele für Joh 3,2, wo davon die Rede ist, dass Nikodemus *in der Nacht* kommt, schon aus diesem Grunde unbrauchbar. Darüber hinaus sind die wenigen angeführten verstreuten Empfehlungen für nächtliches Studium zum allergrößten Teil erst Jahrhunderte nach der Entstehung des Johannesevangeliums anzusiedeln. Zur Diskussion weiterer historisierender Lösungen des Problems vgl. T. NICKLAS, *Ablösung und Verstrickung*. 'Juden' und Jüngergestalten als Charaktere der erzählten Welt des Johannesevangeliums und ihre Wirkung auf den impliziten Leser (RSrTh 60; Frankfurt/Main u.a. 2001) 228-229.

die Hand. 3,20f., der Schluss der Einheit, spricht nämlich vom “Kommen zum Licht”. Eine Inklusion zu 3,2 entsteht. Offen bleibt dabei allerdings, ob der nächtliche Besuch des Nikodemus bei Jesus als ein Kommen aus der Nacht zum Licht oder eher als Zeichen dafür, dass der Führer der “Juden” in der Finsternis der mangelnden Erkenntnis verbleibt, zu interpretieren ist⁽⁵¹⁾. In Joh 3,2 aber findet sich nicht die einzige johanneische Zeitangabe, die durch ihre offensichtliche Überflüssigkeit *als rein chronologischer Hinweis* zu symbolischer Deutung anregt⁽⁵²⁾: Schwieriger liegt der Fall in Joh 2,1. Auch die Erwähnung des “3. Tages” zum Eingang der berühmten Erzählung von der “Hochzeit zu Kana” ist ja vor allem deswegen *als reine Zeitangabe* funktionslos, da sie alleine mit ebenfalls nur relativen, nicht aber absolut datierbaren chronologischen Angaben (1,29.35.43) in Zusammenhang gesetzt werden kann⁽⁵³⁾. So überrascht es nicht, dass auch

⁽⁵¹⁾ Zur Doppeldeutigkeit der Symbolik vgl. z.B. J.M. BASSLER, “Mixed Signals. Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel”, *JBL* 108 (1989) 636-646, bes. 638.

⁽⁵²⁾ Nur in Fußnote hingewiesen sei auf einige weitere Beispiele: (1) Die Zeitangabe “Es war um die 10. Stunde” (Joh 1,39) fällt besonders auf, weil sie in einer Szene begegnet, in der keine Ortsangaben gemacht werden. Gleichzeitig ist nicht gesagt, um die “10. Stunde” welchen Tages es sich hier handelt. Die Schwierigkeit, hinter der Zehnzahl eine eindeutige Symbolik zu entdecken, mag einer der Gründe dafür sein, dass sich bereits in der Textgeschichte Abweichungen finden, so z.B. die Änderung in die “sechste Stunde” in Codex Alexandrinus (A). Zur Problematik der Auslegung vgl. NICKLAS, *Ab-lösung*, 203-204, sowie K. WENGST, *Das Johannesevangelium* (ThKNT 4.1; Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln 2000) I, 88. – (2) Leichter lässt sich Joh 4,6 (“sechste Stunde”) deuten. Zwar wurde vermutet, dass sie Jesu Müdigkeit oder seinen Durst begründe, die Tatsache, dass sie aber erst *nach* der Notiz vom Rasten erzählt wird, lässt dies aber als eher unwahrscheinlich erscheinen. Soll hier ein Gegensatz zur “Nacht” des Nikodemus hergestellt werden? Ist hier darauf angespielt, dass die folgende Erzählung sich im vollen “Licht” des Tages abspielt, welches gleichzeitig Zeichen für das Licht der Offenbarung ist? Eine letzte Entscheidung ist auch hier nicht möglich — der Text bleibt offen. Zur Auslegungsgeschichte vgl. zuletzt S. SCHAPDICK, *Auf dem Weg in den Konflikt*. Exegetische Studien zum theologischen Profil der Erzählung vom Aufenthalt Jesu in Samarien (Joh 4,1-42) im Kontext des Johannesevangeliums (BBB 126; Berlin 2000) 116-117.

⁽⁵³⁾ Auch hier dürften historisch orientierte Auslegungen wie etwa die Angabe, dass mit dem “dritten Tag” der klassische jüdische Hochzeitstag gemeint sei (vgl. z.B. J.A.T. ROBINSON, *The Priority of John* [London 1985] 165-167; G. SCHWARZ, “τη ημερα τη τριτη [Johannes 2,1]”, *BN* 13 [1980] 56), am Kern der Aussage vorbeigehen: Wenn der dritte Tag selbstverständlicher jüdischer Hochzeitstag gewesen ist, warum muss dann diese Zeitangabe noch gemacht werden? Andererseits: Wenn dieses Wissen bei den Lesern des Johannesevan-

Joh 2,1 eine reiche und komplexe Auslegungsgeschichte erfahren hat⁽⁵⁴⁾, die grundsätzlich zwei Richtungen genommen hat: Einerseits wurde und wird versucht, den “dritten Tag” der Kanaerzählung in ein übergreifendes, symbolisch zu interpretierendes chronologisches Schema der ersten Tage des Wirkens des johanneischen Jesus einzusetzen. V.a. der Versuch, eine erste Woche zu rekonstruieren, hat dabei sogar textkritische Entscheidungen (zu 1,41) beeinflusst⁽⁵⁵⁾. Größere Plausibilität dürfte vielleicht die Interpretation beanspruchen können, die die Wendung vom “dritten Tag” *an sich* auf ihre Symbolkraft befragt. Die Tatsache, dass der Erzähler selbst das Kanawunder als “Offenbarung der Herrlichkeit” Jesu (2,11) interpretiert, macht es zumindest wahrscheinlich, dass 2,1 Bezüge zur Sinai-Theophanie (Ex 19,10f.16) anklingen lassen möchte⁽⁵⁶⁾. Die Offenheit des Erzählten aber lässt es nicht ausschließen, dass weitere intertextuelle Bezüge hergestellt werden: Angeführt werden Hos 6,2, aber auch die Verbindung der Rede vom “dritten Tag” mit der Auferstehung Jesu ist — zumindest auf *rezeptionsorientierter Seite* — plausibel, während sich der letzte Beweis, was der/die historische(n) Autor(en) des Textes mit der Wendung anzielten, m.E. nicht führen lässt⁽⁵⁷⁾.

geliums *nicht* vorausgesetzt werden kann, warum wird der “dritte Tag” dann nicht wie etwa die in 2,6 erwähnten Steinkrüge als jüdischen Bräuchen entsprechend erklärt?

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Vgl. hierzu v.a. die Zusammenfassungen bei W. LÜTGEHETMANN, *Die Hochzeit von Kana (Joh 2,1-11)*. Zu Ursprung und Deutung einer Wundergeschichte im Rahmen johanneischer Redaktionsgeschichte (BU 20; Regensburg 1990) 30-38.135-140, und H. RIEDL, *Zeichen und Herrlichkeit*. Die christologische Relevanz der Semeiaquelle in den Kanawundern Joh 2,1-11 und Joh 4,46-54 (RSth 51; Frankfurt/Main u.a. 1997) 281-284.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ So wird immer wieder — trotz schlechter äußerer Bezeugung — für die Ursprünglichkeit der Lesart $\pi\rho\omega\iota$ in 1,41 plädiert. Damit ließe sich dann für Joh 1,19-2,11 ein “Sieben-Tage-Schema” nach dem Modell der Schöpfungsgeschichte konstruieren. Vgl. z.B. T. BARROSSE, “The Seven Days of the New Creation in St. John’s Gospel”, *CBQ* 21 (1959) 507-516, bes. 511; M.-É. BOISMARD, *Moïse ou Jésus*. Essai de christologie johannique (BETHL 84; Leuven 1988) 79-80; F. MANNS, “Éléments de christologie johannique”, *BeO* 40 (1998) 169-192; H. VAN DEN BUSCHE, “La structure de Jean I-XII”, *L’Évangile de Jean. Études et problèmes* (Hrsg. M.-É. BOISMARD et al.) (RechBib; Leuven 1958) 61-109, bes. 68.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Vgl. hierzu und zum Folgenden auch die Argumentation bei RIEDL, *Zeichen*, 282-283.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Diese Frage erhält eine zusätzliche Dimension, wenn man bedenkt, dass der Text von Joh 2,1-11 ja wohl eine Entwicklung in mehreren Stufen voraussetzt und so eventuell auch von mehreren “Autoren” bzw. “Redaktoren” in einem zeitlichen Nacheinander gesprochen werden müsste.

(2) Wiederum mit dem bereits erwähnten Nikodemus verbunden ist eine *Zahlenangabe*, die in etwas anderer Form als die bisherigen Beispiele zu tiefgründigen Überlegungen Anlass gibt: So wird in Joh 19,39 davon berichtet, dass er zum Begräbnis Jesu eine “Mischung aus Myrrhe und Aloe, *etwa 100 Pfund*” heranbrachte. Im Gegensatz zu den in 21,11 erwähnten 153 Fischen handelt es sich hier ganz deutlich um eine *ungefähre* Menge, auf die Zahl *an sich* wird also kein Wert gelegt. Warum aber ist diese überhaupt notwendig? Wäre die Erzählung rein vordergründig am Historischen interessiert, so müsste sie zumindest klären, wie Nikodemus es schaffen konnte, diese ungeheure Menge zum Grab zu bringen. Erst die Zahlenangabe — jenseits aller historischen Plausibilität⁽⁵⁸⁾ — gibt der Szene ihre eigentliche Symbolkraft: Die Bestattung Jesu lässt sich so als *königliches* Begräbnis interpretieren⁽⁵⁹⁾, intertextuelle Bezüge etwa zu Jer 34,5 tun sich auf, die Verbindung zur Kreuzigung Jesu als “König der Juden” (19,19-20) wird evident⁽⁶⁰⁾.

(3) Auch einige Erklärungen des Erzählers zur Geographie bzw. Ortsbeschreibungen erhalten ihre Bedeutung deswegen, weil sie gerade vor dem Hintergrund der Knappheit und szenischen Offenheit des

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Die ungeheure Mengenangabe hat auch hier zu textkritischen Spekulationen geführt. Vgl. M.-J. LAGRANGE, *Évangile selon Saint Jean* (ÉtB; Paris 1948) 503.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Vgl. die Diskussion bei R.E. BROWN, *The Death of the Messiah* (ABRL; New York u.a. 1994) II, 1260. Zur Bedeutung des Königtums Jesu in der johanneischen Passionsgeschichte vgl. darüber hinaus z.B. M. HENGEL, “Reich Christi, Reich Gottes und Weltreich im Johannesevangelium”, *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult im Judentum, Urchristentum und in der hellenistischen Welt* (Hrsg. M. HENGEL – A.M. SCHWEMER) (WUNT 55; Tübingen 1991) 163-184.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Offen bleibt m.E. damit die Frage, ob Nikodemus mit dieser seiner letzten Aktion, die im Johannesevangelium geschildert wird, nun als Glaubender im johanneischen Sinne verstanden werden darf. Einerseits mag argumentiert werden, dass gerade die Tatsache, dass er Jesus ein königliches Begräbnis bereitet, als Zeichen dafür zu deuten ist, dass er zumindest jetzt Jesu Messianität anerkennt. Andererseits begegnet Nikodemus bei den Erzählungen um die Auferstehung nicht mehr. Zur Diskussion vgl. z.B. die unterschiedlichen Auffassungen bei B. HEMELSOET, “L’Énsevelissement selon Saint Jean”, *Studies in John Presented to Professor Dr. J.N. Sevenster* (NT.S 24; Leiden 1970) 47-65, und M. DE JONGE, “Nicodemus and Jesus: Some Observations on Misunderstanding and Understanding in the Fourth Gospel”, *Jesus: Stranger from Heaven and Son of God* (SBL.SBS 11; Missoula 1977) 29-48, bes. 33-34. M.E. ist es aber gerade die Ambivalenz und die damit einhergehende Offenheit der Nikodemusgestalt, die diese besonders anziehend und interessant macht.

Erzählten Signalwirkung erhalten. Nur ein Beispiel sei kurz angesprochen⁽⁶¹⁾: Das Selbstzeugnis Jesu als "Licht der Welt" (8,12-20) — eine offene Szene, welche mit der nur sehr vagen Situationsangabe *πάλιν* eingeleitet ist — endet mit der überraschenden Ortsangabe⁽⁶²⁾ "in der Schatzkammer im Tempel" (8,20). Neben der Tatsache, dass eine Rede, die weder zeitlich genau eingeordnet ist, noch sich an deutlich spezifizierte Adressaten richtet, so präzise verortet wird, fällt hier vor allem die Stellung dieser Angabe *als Nachtrag* am Ende der Rede auf. Diese beiden Beobachtungen *miteinander* sind es, die auch hier die Frage nach einer möglichen Symbolik anregen. Die Lösung mag wohl mit der Rolle zusammenhängen, die der Ort für die Lichtsymbolik des Laubhüttenfestes spielte, in dessen Umfeld (7,1) die Szene anzusiedeln ist⁽⁶³⁾: Die nachgeschobene Bemerkung, Jesus habe gerade in (bzw. bei) der Schatzkammer im Tempel davon gesprochen, dass *er* das Licht der Welt sei, verleiht der Szene so erst ihre eigentliche Pointe⁽⁶⁴⁾.

(4) In der Diskussion von Stellen, in denen offensichtliche Verstöße gegen die Ökonomie des Erzählens den "johanneischen Überstieg" erlauben, darf schließlich die Kreuzigungsszene (Joh 19,16b-30) nicht fehlen. Da eine Gesamtinterpretation des mit einer Vielzahl von

(61) Auch hier ist keineswegs Vollständigkeit angezielt. Zumindest in Fußnote sei auf einige zusätzliche Stellen verwiesen: (1) Die Begründung der Wahl des Tauforts "Änon bei Salim" durch Johannes in 3,23 ("weil dort viel Wasser war") wirkt überflüssig. Die Bemerkung gewinnt allerdings an Bedeutung, wenn man sie als nach 1,26.33 erneuten Hinweis interpretiert, dass Johannes der ist, der *nur* mit Wasser tauft. Vgl. hierzu auch die entsprechende Passage in meinem Aufsatz "Literarkritik und Leserrezeption" [im Druck]. – (2) Joh 9,7 erklärt den Namen "Schiloach" als "Gesandter". Natürlich muss eine derartige Bemerkung gerade im Kontext einer Blindenheilung auffallen und kann sicherlich nicht dahingehend verstanden werden, dass hier eine zeitgeschichtliche Information zur Topographie Jerusalems gegeben werden möchte. Hingewiesen wird vielmehr in erster Linie auf die Tatsache, dass es Jesus, der Gesandte, ist, der das Wunder der Blindenheilung wirkt. Vgl. hierzu die Diskussion mit ausführlichen Literaturangaben bei NICKLAS, *Ablösung*, 342-351.

(62) So auch R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HTbK 4.2; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1990) II, 248.

(63) Vgl. hierzu z.B. C.R. KOESTER, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*. Meaning, Mystery, Community (Minneapolis 1995) 141-142.

(64) Hingewiesen sei allerdings auch auf eine weitere Interpretation, die die Angabe "im Tempel" besonders in den Vordergrund rückt. So schreibt etwa R. BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (KeK 2; Göttingen 21986) 213: "Die Ortsangabe charakterisiert die Bedeutsamkeit der Szene: im Tempel selbst haben sie [die "Juden"; Anm. d. Vf.] ihre Verschlossenheit für den Offenbarer dokumentiert!"

Problemen behafteten Abschnitts im vorliegenden Rahmen zu weit führen würde, seien nur einige Aspekte des Ganzen herausgegriffen: Bereits in 19,18 fällt — vor allem vor dem Hintergrund, dass nicht vollends deutlich wird, *wer* Jesus zur Kreuzigung führt⁽⁶⁵⁾ — die genaue Beschreibung der Anordnung der drei Gekreuzigten auf. Betont wird dabei die Mittelstellung des Jesus-Kreuzes. Soll durch dieses Detail — wie durch so viele andere Aussagen der johanneische Passion vorbereitet — die Interpretation der Kreuzigung Jesu als “Erhöhung”, ja als geradezu königliches Thronen angeregt werden? Die Verbindung mit V. 19, dem Hinweis auf das Staurogramm, legt diese Deutung nahe. Diese führt wiederum V. 20 weiter: Joh bietet hier als einziges der vier kanonischen Evangelien die Information, dass die Aufschrift in drei Sprachen verfasst gewesen sei. Dies lässt die Folgerung zu, dass der Gedanke vom Königtum Jesu sich an den gesamten Erdkreis richte, da das Staurogramm davon in den damals bedeutenden Weltsprachen verkündet. Ein ganz klarer Fall liegt in 19,23 vor. Die Notiz vom “Untergewand” Jesu, das gänzlich durchgewebt und ohne Naht gewesen sei, würde — als rein historische Reminiszenz interpretiert — eindeutig gegen das “Prinzip erzählerischer Ökonomie” verstoßen und verlangt geradezu nach einer tieferen Deutung. Tatsächlich hat dieser Text eine Unzahl von Auslegungen angeregt, die im Einzelnen durchzudiskutieren sicherlich zu weit führen würde⁽⁶⁶⁾. Hingewiesen sei v.a. auf die Deutung, Jesus werde hier aufgrund seines Gewandes als *Hoherpriester* gezeichnet sowie auf den Gedanken, der ungenähte Leibrock Jesu sei als Symbol für die *Einheit der Kirche* zu verstehen. Auch hier lässt der Text keine letzte Entscheidung zu, V. 24 immerhin stellt eine Verbindung zu Ps 22,19 her⁽⁶⁷⁾.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Historisch gedacht, können eigentlich nur die römischen Soldaten des Pilatus Subjekt des παρέλαβον auf 19,16b sein. Der Text an sich ließe sich aber auch vor dem Hintergrund von 19,14f. dahingehend interpretieren, dass Pilatus Jesus an die “Juden” ausgeliefert habe. Dass ein derartiges Verständnis der Kreuzigungsszene sich tatsächlich bereits im frühen Christentum zumindest teilweise durchzusetzen begann, zeigen z.B. die entsprechenden Passagen des apokryphen Petrus-evangeliums oder die Texte mancher textgeschichtlich sekundärer neutestamentlicher Handschriften. Vgl. hierzu z.B. T. NICKLAS, “Die »Juden« im Petrus-evangelium (PCair 10759). Ein Testfall”, *NTS* 46 (2001) 206-221; ID., “Die altsyrische Sinaiticus-Handschrift (Sy^a) als Zeuge antijüdischer Tendenzen”, *Aramaic Studies* 1 (2003) 29-53.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Einen guten Überblick bietet BROWN, *Death*, II, 955-958.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Auch die Erwähnung des Ysopzweiges, auf den mit 19,29 der Essigschwamm gespießt wird, wurde verschiedentlich symbolisch aufgefasst. Vgl. BROWN, *Death*, II, 1074-1077.

IV. Fazit

Bereits die kursorische Übersicht über einige Beispiele aus dem Johannesevangelium erweist Verstöße gegen das "Prinzip erzählerischer Ökonomie" als eine der Techniken, mit der der johanneische Erzähler seine Leser zum "Überstieg" in die eigene Symbolsprache einlädt bzw. sie dazu führt, vordergründig Erzähltes auf einen tieferen Hintergrund zu befragen⁽⁶⁸⁾. Nur an manchen Stellen gibt der Text mehr oder weniger eindeutige Hinweise, wie die so entstehenden Interpretationsprobleme zu lösen sind bzw. in welche Richtung der Leser die auftauchenden Fragen zu beantworten hat. Die Tatsache, dass dies in vielen Fällen gelingt, unterstützt nun zusätzlich die Leservermutung, dass eine derartige eindeutige Lösung *in allen Fällen* möglich sei⁽⁶⁹⁾. Dies aber trifft (zumindest heute) nicht (mehr?) immer zu — die "153 Fische" aus Joh 21,11 sind sicherlich eines der deutlichsten Beispiele hierfür. Die Notiz wird zum Rätsel für den Leser, das dieser nicht zu entwirren vermag, ihn aber gerade deshalb in die erzählte Welt hinein "verstrickt". Besonders solche Stellen jedoch erweisen sich — durch die Verbindung einer Verletzung "erzählerischer Ökonomie" mit gleichzeitiger Offenheit des Textes — als besonders "fruchtbarer" Ansatzpunkt einer reichen Interpretationsgeschichte.

Das Beispiel Joh 21,11 zeigt aber — wie viele der weiteren erwähnten — auch, dass der immer wieder zu lesende Einwand, lesorientierte Auslegungen des Textes könnten die tatsächliche

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Diese Aussage muss nicht bedeuten, dass alle der erwähnten Verstöße von dem bzw. den historischen Autoren angezielt waren, sie ergibt sich vielmehr aus dem Text in seiner heute vorliegenden Form. Verwiesen sei wiederum darauf, dass der "Erzähler" der synchron betrachteten "Geschichte" Johannesevangelium als eine literaturwissenschaftliche Kategorie, eine Funktion des Textes, nicht mit der empirischen Person bzw. dem Personenkreis des historischen Autors verwechselt werden darf.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Ein ähnliches Problem verbindet sich mit der Bemerkung Jesu in Joh 1,48, er habe Natanaël "unter dem Feigenbaum" gesehen. Die Tatsache, dass der Kontext dieser Aussage an mehreren Punkten deutliche intertextuelle Bezüge zu Stellen der Schrift aufweist, konfrontiert den Leser mit der Problematik, auch in dieser zentralen Aussage — Jesus beweist hier sein wunderbares Wissen mit einer Aussage, die zwar Natanaël, nicht aber der Leser auflösen kann — eine Anspielung auf eine Schriftstelle zu vermuten. Die Offenheit der Szene aber macht es unmöglich, das so entstehende Rätsel eindeutig zu lösen. Vgl. hierzu T. NICKLAS, "«Unter dem Feigenbaum». Die Rolle des Lesers im Dialog zwischen Jesus und Natanael", *NTS* 46 (2000) 193-203.

Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Textes nicht erklären⁽⁷⁰⁾, nicht ganz zu halten ist. Zwar ist zwischen empirisch-realen Lesevorgängen und der in ebenfalls mehreren realen Lesevorgängen rekonstruierten Modelllesung zu unterscheiden. In vielen Fällen aber dürften reale Lesevorgänge dem oben Dargestellten konvergieren, wobei empirische Lesevorgänge meist wohl eher dem eines Modelllesers des biblischen Kanons bzw. der kanonischen Evangelien, denn eines Modelllesers des Johannesevangeliums allein konvergieren dürften. Zumindest aber die Tatsache der so reichen, ja kaum überschaubaren Interpretationsgeschichte einer auf den ersten Blick so unscheinbaren Notiz wie der vom Fang der “153 großen Fische” in Joh 21,11, aber auch anderer Stellen, lässt sich — wie gezeigt — gerade mit Hilfe von Überlegungen zur Leserrezeption des Textes verständlich und nachvollziehbar machen.

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SUMMARY

The mention of “One Hundred Fifty-Three Large Fish” in John 21,11 is one of the biblical stories with an extremely broad and diverse history of interpretation. The article offers a reader-oriented analysis of John 21,1-14 and shows that the Johannine narrator here breaks the so-called ‘principle of narrative economy’. By breaking this rule the narrator forces the reader to reinterpret the story told. This narrative technique is to be found not only in chapter 21 of John’s Gospel but also in many other places throughout the text, e.g., 2,1; 3,2, 19,39.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Vgl. hierzu etwa P. MEHRENLAHTI – R. HAKOLA, “Reconceiving Narrative Criticism”, *Characterization in the Gospels* (Hrsg. D. RHOADS – K. SYREENI) (JSNTSS 184; Sheffield 1999) 13-48, bes. 27, und die dort angegebene Literatur.

The High Priest in Chronicles: An Anomaly in a Detailed Description of the Temple Cult

Who is the high priest and what does he do in the Book of Chronicles? This question has received little scholarly attention⁽¹⁾. Indeed, the little information given regarding the figure of the high priest by the Chronicler appears as an anomaly within a historiographic work concerned with the detailed description of cultic practice⁽²⁾.

Before turning to the data in the Book of Chronicles, the following chart briefly displays the occurrences of the two terms used to describe the leading priest throughout the Hebrew Bible, high priest (הכהן הגדול) and chief priest (כהן הראש), to provide a comparative context for their particular appearances in Chronicles.

Occurrences of "High Priest" in the Hebrew Bible

Reference:	Priest to whom term refers:	Civic leader mentioned:
Lev 21,10-15	"the priest exalted above his brothers"	None mentioned
2 Kgs 12,10 // 2 Chr 24,11 [Kgs: high priest; Chr: chief priest]	Jehoiada	King Jehoash
2 Kgs 22,4.8; 23,4 // 2 Chr 34,9 [Kgs: 3 times; Chr: only once]	Hilkiah	King Josiah
Neh 3,1.20.28	Eliashib	Governor Nehemiah
Hag 1,1.12.14; 2,2.4; Zech 3,1.8; 6,11	Joshua	Governor Zerubbabel

(¹) In previous scholarship, virtually no attempt has been made to describe the high priesthood *as it is presented* in Chronicles. One important exception is the recent work of D.W. ROOKE, *Zadok's Heirs. The Role and Development of the High Priesthood in Ancient Israel* (Oxford 2000), who devotes one chapter to the High Priesthood in Chronicles, p. 184-218. My structure for this analysis is different than hers and provides another means of interpreting these data.

(²) Most scholars assume that the presentation of the cult in Chronicles reflects actual temple practice, particularly as it was performed during the Second Temple period. This is best exemplified by the 24 priestly courses and the 24 divisions of the Levites (1 Chr 24,7-19; 25,9-31). For example, see H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, "The Origins of the Twenty-four Priestly Courses: A Study of 1 Chronicles xxiii-xxvii", *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (ed. J.A. EMERTON) (VTS 30; Leiden 1979) 251-268.

Occurrences of "Chief Priest" in the Hebrew Bible

Reference:	Priest to whom term refers:	Civic leader mentioned:
2 Kgs 25,18 // Jer 52,24	Seraiah	King Zedekiah
2 Chr 19,11	Amariah	King Jehoshaphat
2 Chr 24,11 // 2 Kgs 12,10 [Chr: chief priest; Kgs: high priest]	Jehoiada	King Joash
2 Chr 26,20	Azariah	King Uzziah
2 Chr 31,10	Azariah	King Hezekiah
Ezra 7,5 ⁽³⁾	Aaron	Moses

Several things are clear from this chart. First, "high priest" is used only once in Chronicles, and it occurs in a synoptic text that has been rewritten. The other two times Hilkiah is referenced in this way in 2 Kings 22–23, the title has been deleted in Chronicles. Second, the Chronicler replaces "high priest" with "chief priest" in reference to Jehoiada. Third, the title "chief priest" appears four times in Chronicles, but only three times in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. The Chronicler thus acknowledges the existence of the office of "high priest", but *diminishes and does not enhance* the title of the most significant cultic official in the Second Temple period.

*1. The High-Priestly Genealogies**a) Comparison Chart of the Genealogical Lists of "High Priests"*

The table below, similar to those used by previous scholars addressing this genealogical material⁽⁴⁾, summarizes the genealogical material from the Hebrew Bible and Josephus that contains information regarding the office of the high priest. A few observations should be noted. First, none of the "high-priestly lists" in the Hebrew Bible are so designated. The high-priestly lists are always part of other larger complexes: genealogies or settlement lists. Thus, these lists are not explicitly about the high priests. If anything, the lists are about the

⁽³⁾ This could also refer to Ezra himself (with the governor Nehemiah as the civic authority) as it is unclear grammatically to whom the term refers; the parallel text of 1 Esdras 8,1-2 does not clarify the referent, while the term "high (or chief) priest" (ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς) is applied to Ezra in 1 Esdras 9,39.40.49. In the Hebrew Bible, Ezra is called "priest" and "scribe", but never referred to as the high or chief priest in Ezra-Nehemiah or elsewhere.

⁽⁴⁾ See, e.g., B.E. SCOLNIC, *Chronology and Papyponymy*. A List of the Judean High Priests of the Persian Period (SFSHJ 206; Atlanta 1999); W.B. BARRICK, "Genealogical Notes on the 'House of David' and the 'House of Zadok'", *JSOT* 96 (2001) 29-58; and their bibliographies for previous treatment of this material.

tribe of Levi and its importance in Israel's history. This includes the list of high priests in Neh 12,8-11.22, which explicitly calls these individuals "Levites" and locates them in the Levitical line without declaring their priestly status. Second, the evidence from *Antiquities* strongly suggests that portions of the high-priestly list (the beginning and end) had attained a relative degree of stability in transmission.

Sources for 1 Chr 6,1-15	1 Chr 6,1-15	1 Chr 9,11	Neh 11,11	Ezra 7,1-5	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i>
Exod 6,16-25// Num 26,57-62	Levi				
	Kohath				
	Amram				
Ezra 7,1-5; (Aaron, Eleazar, Phineas also mentioned numerous times in Torah; others only in Ezra 7,1-5)	Aaron			Aaron	Aaron (5.361; 20.224-229)
	Eleazar			Eleazar	Eleazar (5.361-362)
	Phineas			Phineas	Phineas (5.361; 7.110; 8.11-12)
	Abishua			Abishua	Abiezer (5.362) / Jesus (8.12)
	Bukki			Bukki	Bokki (5.362; 8.12)
	Uzzi			Uzzi	Ozis (5.362)
	Zerahiah			Zerahiah	Joatham, son of Bokki (8.12) [Eli (not of Eleazar's line in 5.361-362; 6.107; 8.11-12)]
Unknown / Dupli- cation from 6,11	Meraioth			Meraioth	Meraioth (8.12)
	Amariah I				Arophaios (8.12)
2 Sam 8,17 (Ahitub, Zadok); 2 Sam 15, 17, 18 (Ahimaaz); 1 Kgs 4,2 (Azariah)	Ahitub I				Achitob (6.122; 8.12) [Achias his son (6.107)]
	Zadok I				Sadok (7.110; 8.12,16; 10.152) [Abiathar (7.110; 8.11-12,16)]
	Ahimaaz				Achimas (10.152)
	Azariah I				Azarias (10.152)
	Johanan				Joramos (10.152)
Ezra 7,1-5	Azariah II			Azariah	Ios (10.152)
	Amariah II			Amariah	Axoramos (10.152-153)
	Ahitub II	Ahitub	Ahitub	Ahitub	
		Meraioth	Meraioth		Phideas (10.153)
	Zadok II	Zadok	Zadok	Zadok	Sudaïos (10.153) Juelos (10.153) Jothamos (10.153) Urias (10.153) Nerias (10.153) Odaïas (10.153)
	Shallum	Meshallum	Meshallum	Shallum	Sallumos (10.153)
	Hilkiah	Hilkiah	Hilkiah	Hilkiah	Elkias (10.153)
	Azariah III	Azariah		Azariah	Azaros (10.153)
	Seraiah	Seraiah	Seraiah		Seraiah (10.149-150)
	Jehozadak				Josadak (10.150,153; 20.231)
				Ezra	

Neh 12,8-11.22: And the Levites ... Joshua, Joiakim, Eliashib, Joiada, Jonathan/Johanan, Jaddua

However, the middle of the list was more fluid and provided the opportunity for expansion, both by Josephus and the Chronicler⁽⁵⁾. Third, the distinction between “high” and “chief” priest in the Hebrew Bible is blurred by Josephus who uses the same term, ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, for both titles.

b) The Genealogy of 1 Chr 6,1-15

The genealogy in 1 Chr 6,1-15, is a composite text constructed from a variety of sources. The sequence “Levi, Kohath, Amram” is taken from the Priestly source⁽⁶⁾. This beginning supports the claim that “all priests are Levites, but all Levites are not priests”⁽⁷⁾.

The sequence “Ahitub, Zadok, Ahimaaz, Azariah” is gleaned from the narrative in DtrH; this then presents Zadok I as David’s Zadok, which is a temporal problem for Azariah II being the priest in the new temple under Solomon (1 Chr 6,10; cf. 1 Kgs 4,1-4). A common resolution is to emend this temple claim and to apply it to Azariah I, which although lacking textual evidence, makes sense on chronological grounds if the genealogical material is to be read in conversation with the narratives that follow⁽⁸⁾. The selection of Amariah as the name for this additional necessary individual has apparently been taken from the duplicate sequence in the following list of “Amariah, Ahitub, Zadok”. The sequences of Aaron through Meraioth and Azariah II through Seraiah apparently have been reproduced from Ezra 7,1-5.

The sequence “Azariah, Johanan, Azariah” is difficult to assess. Why Azariah I (from 1 Kings) and Azariah II (from Ezra 7) were not considered the same individual by the Chronicler has no easy answer. It may reflect the tendency towards expansion of lists rather than

⁽⁵⁾ Without recourse to this passage, R.R. WILSON, *Genealogy and History in the Biblical World* (New Haven 1977) esp. 27-36, 162, has noted this same general tendency in both oral and written genealogies.

⁽⁶⁾ Exod 6,16-25 // Num 26,57-62 (both certainly P).

⁽⁷⁾ This is a paraphrase of the arguments made by A. CODY, *A History of Old Testament Priesthood* (AnBib 35; Rome 1969) 167.

⁽⁸⁾ If this emendation is accepted, then this may explain the insertion of Amariah I, since Azariah I would then be the 13th generation from the exodus to the construction of the temple. Thus, 12 generations before the temple at the stereotypical 40 years per generation results in 480 years, which matches the number of years claimed in 1 Kgs 6,1. See S. JAPHET, *I & II Chronicles*. A Commentary (OTL; Louisville 1993) 150-151. However, the usefulness of this emendation has been recently questioned by BARRICK, “Genealogical Notes,” 45.

contraction or assimilation in the ancient world⁽⁹⁾. However, the fact that they were not assimilated caused a noticeable difficulty: father and son would have the same name, without the insertion of Johanan.

Only the names of Amariah I and Johanan do not appear in the source material used by the Chronicler to construct this genealogy⁽¹⁰⁾. I have already suggested why Amariah was used, and the insertion of Johanan may have been simply to add a generation between the two Azariah's. However, why select the name "Johanan" in particular?

While this question cannot be answered with certainty, I suggest the following explanation. Perhaps the choice of the name Johanan was taken from the current high priest at the time when the Chronicler was writing his history. Following VanderKam's reconstruction of the high priesthood during the Persian period, Johanan would have attained the office sometime prior to 408 BCE (as can be determined from TAD A4.7) and continued to hold it "until c. 370, or perhaps even beyond"⁽¹¹⁾. This explanation would also be consistent with Cross' more complex reconstruction that places Johanan III in office at this time until his son, Jaddua (III), would have become high priest⁽¹²⁾.

The final observation about the genealogical list of high priests in 1 Chr 6,1-15 is that while there are some priests named in both the genealogical list and the narrative, there are others who are only

(9) The tendency towards expansion rather than contraction or assimilation can be observed in the following examples from the ancient world: the Sumerian King List, the Ugaritic King List, the Assyrian King List, the Babylonian King Lists, the *Hesiodic Catalogue of Women*, and the *Genealogies* of Hecataeus of Miletus. The Synchronistic Chronicle obviously engages in assimilation (as its name indicates), but also exhibits the same tendency toward expansion.

(10) I have not accepted the suggestion by BARRICK, "Genealogical Notes", 46, that Johanan in 1 Chr 6,9-10 is Jonathan ben Abiathar from DtrH (citing 2 Sam 15,27.36; 17,17-22; 1 Kgs 1,42-43). Accepting the identification of this non-Zadokite priest with Johanan would remove Jonathan three generations from his appropriate temporal location in the list, based on the chronology of Samuel-Kings.

(11) J.C. VANDERKAM, "Jewish High Priests of the Persian Period: Is the List Complete?", *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. G.A. ANDERSON – S.M. OLYAN) (JSOTSS 125; Sheffield 1991) 67-91, here 90; on the content of TAD A4.7 see B. PORTEN, *The Elephantine Papyri in English* (Leiden 1996); this text was previously identified as AP 30 in A.E. COWLEY, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 1923).

(12) F.M. CROSS, "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration", *JBL* 94 (1975) 4-18; repr., *Int* 29 (1975) 187-203. Cross, of course, believes that this Jaddua (III) is the Jaddua associated with Alexander the Great (see Josephus, *Ant.* 11.302-347).

mentioned in the narrative or who cannot be equated with individuals in the list because of chronological difficulties. Zadok and Hilkiah are the only leading priests named in both the genealogy and the narrative. There are four priests — and also the only ones termed “chief priest” in Chronicles — that appear only in the narrative. They are: Jehoiada (2 Chr 22–24), the Azariah under Uzziah (2 Chr 26,16–21), the Azariah of the house of Zadok under Hezekiah (2 Chr 31,9–19), and the Amariah under Jehoshaphat — although it is chronologically possible that he is Amariah II from the genealogy (2 Chr 19,5–11)⁽¹³⁾. While the identity of Amariah is uncertain, it is clear that the first three chief priests have been excluded from the Zadokite lineage presented in the genealogy. Jehoiada has no ancestry⁽¹⁴⁾, Uzziah’s Azariah (who is unique to Chronicles) is also without an ancestry; and Hezekiah’s Azariah is strangely “of the house of Zadok” but not to be found among his descendants in 1 Chr 6,1–15⁽¹⁵⁾. The Chronicler creates two priests (the two Azariah’s) and has another in his source specifically called a “high priest” who has now become “chief priest” (namely, Jehoiada).

I will assess the data concerning the high priest in Chronicles according to the inclusion and exclusion of names in this genealogical list of high priests. First, I will address the priests that are included in both the list and the narrative. Next, I will discuss the priests mentioned only in the narrative. Following this, I will deal with the ambiguous case of Amariah II separately. Finally, I will compare and contrast the presentation of these groups of leading priests in Chronicles.

⁽¹³⁾ Such an association is typical in scholarship. However, JAPHET, *I & II Chronicles*, 150–151, stresses that this association is “only possible.”

⁽¹⁴⁾ His ancestry is lacking in both 2 Kgs 11 and in 2 Chr 22–24.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Throughout the narrative in Chronicles any notion of high-priestly succession is only vaguely implied once by the term “the house of Zadok” (2 Chr 31,10) which is applied to this Azariah under Hezekiah. It is not clear that the leading priests were all of the “house of Zadok” or if this is noted in the narrative because it is exceptional. The phrase “house of” does not automatically imply hereditary succession (in this case referring to the high-priestly office) as demonstrated by a certain Jehoiada that joins David, for whom it is chronologically impossible to be the one associated with Joash, who is of “the house of Aaron” (1 Chr 12,27). Also, a certain Zadok, “a young warrior ... from his own ancestral house”, joins David at the same time (1 Chr 12,28); this could be *the* Zadok, but there is no conclusive evidence. In Chronicles, this lack of explicit succession language is accompanied by neither the description of a father passing it to his son nor of a high priest being called “son of” anyone.

2. *High Priests mentioned in both the Genealogical Material and the Narrative*

a) Zadok

Zadok, who is never termed “high priest” or “chief priest” in the entire Hebrew Bible, is mentioned several times during the reign of David. Zadok is possibly first mentioned as joining David at Hebron, although this association is not clear (1 Chr 12,28). He is next singled out in David’s command to bring up the ark to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom (1 Chr 15,11-15). In this passage he is mentioned first along with Abiathar and several Levites. He is addressed by David as one of the “heads of the families of the Levites”. This is most likely an intentional move by the Chronicler to provide Zadok with a Levitical heritage, as well as Abiathar. When the ark is finally brought to Jerusalem, Levites under Asaph are assigned to attend it while the rest of the tabernacle apparatus with its functioning sacrificial cult is left at Gibeon under the direction of Zadok (1 Chr 16,37-42).

Zadok is also explicitly mentioned in 1 Chr 24,3-4 (cf. 2 Sam 8,17) in tandem with Ahimelech when the priestly divisions are organized by the two of them and David. This method of organizing the priestly divisions is different from the organization of the Levitical divisions mentioned in 1 Chr 23, which David does alone. Leading priests have input in the matters of the priestly structure while they do not have authority over the Levites. The Levites are responsible to other Levites who are in turn responsible to the king rather than to any priest⁽¹⁶⁾.

At the transition from David’s reign to Solomon’s in 1 Chr 29,22b-25, Zadok appears again. Zadok is anointed as priest just as Solomon is anointed as prince (נִיר). This is the only passage in the Hebrew Bible outside the Torah which refers to a priest being anointed for service⁽¹⁷⁾. This elevated status of Zadok seems at odds with the fact

⁽¹⁶⁾ Zadok’s role as “leading priest” is certainly not stressed in the organization of the temple cult nor is he the one to whom the functionaries of the temple cult are responsible; he does possess some authority in the operation of *priestly* duties. See especially 1 Chr 9,28-32; 15,16-24; 23,12-14.25-32; 25,1-8; 26,22-28. Priestly duties and Levitical duties are clearly distinguished throughout the larger complex of 1 Chr 23–27 in terms consistent with the first occurrence of this language in 1 Chr 6,48-53, and subsequent details given in 1 Chr 9,17-34.

⁽¹⁷⁾ While ‘the anointed priest’ is mentioned several times in Leviticus (4,3.5.16; 6,22; 16,32; 21,10), the only other references to the actual anointing of priests occur in reference to Aaron and his sons at the inception of the priesthood (Exod 28,41; 29,7.21.29-30; 30,22-33; Lev 6,19-23; 8,1–9,24). This anointing of

that he fails to appear during the entire reign of Solomon (2 Chr 1–9), even in the building of the temple and the formal institution of its cult. Zadok may be anointed as priest, but he is never shown to function as one in the temple⁽¹⁸⁾.

b) Hilkiah

The only priest explicitly called “high priest” in Chronicles is Hilkiah, who is also a Zadokite (1 Chr 6,13; 2 Chr 34,9). The term “high priest” is retained from 2 Kgs 22,4, while its occurrences in 2 Kgs 22,8 and 23,4 have been deleted by the Chronicler⁽¹⁹⁾.

The Chronicler tends to follow his source, which limits Hilkiah’s role in the account of Josiah’s reforms⁽²⁰⁾. In the lengthy addition to the Pesach narrative, Hilkiah’s role and duties are not described while the duties and actions of the priests and Levites are given in detail (2 Chr 35,1-19)⁽²¹⁾. Two activities not mentioned in his source are added by the Chronicler: Hilkiah is singled out among the group sent by Josiah to the prophetess Huldah, and Hilkiah along with two other priests — all three being termed *גִּידֵי בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים* “chief officers of the house of God” — provide for the priestly portions at Pesach (2 Chr 34,22; 35,8). Thus, Hilkiah is under the authority of the king and has a place of prominence and responsibility distinct from ordinary priests. However, it is not explicitly stated that this prestige is specifically a

Zadok should be seen as an authorizing move by Chronicles to connect Zadok with the Aaronide line in the same way that the genealogy provides his Aaronide (and Levitical) pedigree. For a text outside the Hebrew Bible, see Sir 45,15; cf. 2 Macc 1,10; 4Q375; 4Q376 which also mention the “anointed priest”.

⁽¹⁸⁾ This does not include 1 Chr 16,37-42 where he is explicitly in charge of the priestly cult at Gibeon, but his duties are not described.

⁽¹⁹⁾ The text of 2 Chr 34,9 is a rewriting of the Kings passage in that commands of Josiah are now narrative descriptions of actions taken. Therefore, it is significant that in this overt rewriting Chronicles retains the title here while apparently eliminating it elsewhere from its source.

⁽²⁰⁾ In 2 Kings, Hilkiah finds the book of the Torah in the temple, gives it to Shaphan, and is placed in charge of the money collected for the temple repairs. Chronicles maintains this portrayal and agrees with its source in not giving Hilkiah any role in the Passover celebration or in the covenant renewal and reading of the Torah done by Josiah.

⁽²¹⁾ This is one of the few passages in which the distinction between priests and Levites is blurred. In this case, Levites assume priestly duties; priests *never* assume Levitical duties. There is a consistent distinction between priests and Levites in Chronicles; see G.N. KNOPPERS, “Hierodules, Priests, or Janitors?: The Levites in Chronicles and the History of the Israelite Priesthood”, *JBL* 118 (1999) 49-72.

result of his position as “high priest”; it could be a result of his position as “chief officer of the house of God”, which was apparently held by more than one individual at the same time according to Chronicles.

3. *Chief Priests mentioned only in the Narrative*

a) The Azariah under Uzziah

At least three chief priests are mentioned in the narrative but not in the genealogical list. The Azariah under Uzziah is presented in a brief explanatory narrative, unique to Chronicles, as a defender of the priestly, but not explicitly high-priestly, privilege of offering incense in 2 Chr 26,16-21⁽²²⁾. The chief priest Azariah seems to be in charge of these priests, at least as their spokesman, and to exercise authority over issues of cultic purity and privilege.

b) The Azariah under Hezekiah⁽²³⁾

While completely absent from the detailed description of Hezekiah’s reforms⁽²⁴⁾, the chief priest Azariah seems responsible for the priests *and* the Levites in other contexts. First, Azariah responds to Hezekiah’s question addressed to the priests and Levites. This may suggest that he speaks on behalf of both groups who are responsible to him. Second, the appointments of Levites over the newly built store-chambers are made by “King Hezekiah and Azariah the chief officer of

⁽²²⁾ However, there may be a suggestion by the Chronicler of an infraction of high-priestly duty by supplying the cause and location of Uzziah’s leprosy, which are both missing from 2 Kgs 15,1-7. His attempt to offer incense results in leprosy on his forehead (מצח), the same word used in connection with the high priest’s engraved golden plate listed among his unique apparel in Exod 28,36-38. However, this connection to the high-priestly garments is not certain as the same word for “forehead” is used to refer to Goliath’s in 1 Sam 17,49.

⁽²³⁾ While it is possible that the Azariah under Hezekiah could be the same individual as the Azariah under Uzziah, the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz would require a minimum of 32 years before Hezekiah would come to the throne (2 Chr 27,1; 28,1). If Azariah was a young man under Uzziah, then it is possible for him to still be in office at least 32 years later. However, the text provides no evidence to determine whether this individual is the same in both cases. If anything, the added clarification of his being of the house of Zadok (2 Chr 31,10), which is not mentioned with the earlier Azariah, may point to two different people.

⁽²⁴⁾ As has been recognized, Hezekiah is portrayed as a new David-Solomon; see M.A. THRONTVEIT, “Hezekiah in the Books of Chronicles”, *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1988 (SBLSP 27; Atlanta 1988) 302-311. The failure to mention Azariah may be explained as a parallel to Zadok’s ceremonial absence during the reigns of David and Solomon.

the house of God" (2 Chr 31,13). Azariah has administrative responsibilities in the cult. However, he has no authority beyond this role and is responsible to the Davidic king.

c) Jehoiada

The depiction of Jehoiada, apparently a non-Zadokite, presents the largest amount of data concerning the office of leading priest (2 Chr 22–24). His portrayal in Chronicles is consistent in many ways with that in 2 Kgs 11–12⁽²⁵⁾. There are, however, several instances of an increased role and power being attributed to Jehoiada by the Chronicler which are not stated explicitly or clearly in his source⁽²⁶⁾. Jehoiada has married into the Davidic line as his wife is the daughter of King Jehoram. This additional information has been seen by scholars as an attempt by the Chronicler to protect the purity of the temple since this female Davidide lives in the house of God for six years. However, this explanation does not account for Joash's presence, which would also be a problem and which Chronicles does not address. In addition, such a marriage would seem to violate the purity regulations for the "priest exalted above his brothers" in Lev 21,10-15 which command this priest to marry only a virgin of his own kin. Jehoiada is obviously in violation of this command (if it even applies to him)⁽²⁷⁾.

⁽²⁵⁾ Jehoiada protects the hidden Joash in the temple, leads the military coup against Athaliah, assists the king in temple repair, and provides positive moral influence on the king.

⁽²⁶⁾ In 2 Kgs 12,9-10 Jehoiada himself makes the money chest and is called "high priest". In the parallel of 2 Chr 23,8-11, the maker of the chest is not specified and Jehoiada is termed "chief priest". Both of these changes seem to *diminish* the role of Jehoiada.

⁽²⁷⁾ The focus of scholarship has been on the issue of temple purity without reference to the legislation of Lev 21,10-15. Making Jehoshabeath into the wife of Jehoiada for issues of temple purity has been seen in connection with the substitution of "Levites" for "guards" by the Chronicler in order to have only Levites and priests in the inner parts of the temple. While this concern for purity may be behind the replacement, the clarification of Levites for guards may also simply reflect the Chronicler's understanding that the guards of the first temple were Levites, just as they were in his own time. This would be consistent with the replacement of "Levites" for "prophets" in 2 Chr 34,30; the general function of prophets seems to be associated with the Levites by the Chronicler, although this is often taken as a retrojection of his present situation into the First Temple period. See W.M. SCHNIEDEWIND, *The Word of God in Transition*. From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period (JSOTSS 197; Sheffield 1995) 186, 249; and S.J. DE VRIES, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (FOTL 11; Grand Rapids 1989) 408.

As in 2 Kings, not only does Jehoiada save the Davidic line from destruction, but also his actions place him in a position temporarily superior to it⁽²⁸⁾. Joash is only seven years old when these events occur, so Jehoiada takes these actions as an exceptional case. However, the exception proves the rule. When Joash is old enough, Jehoiada is depicted as under the king's authority and answerable to him (2 Chr 24,4-14). Jehoiada is not presented as an equal to the king or as having political power⁽²⁹⁾.

He also is apparently in charge of cultic matters and in charge of both the Levites and the priests (2 Chr 31,9-10). Joash summons Jehoiada and seems to assume in his comments that Jehoiada is responsible for the actions, or rather inactions, of the Levites (2 Chr 24,4-6)⁽³⁰⁾.

Jehoiada is buried in the royal tombs while Joash is not (2 Chr 24,15-16.25-27). The fact that Chronicles allows, or even creates the idea, that a "worthy" leading priest can have a royal burial may be significant. However, this is clearly an exception, which once again proves the rule. Leading priests are not typically given royal burials, but the possibility is at least held out as an option. Could this be a retrojection of Second Temple practice by the Chronicler? Possibly, but no conclusion on this point can be definitive.

Finally, the most explicit statement made regarding Jehoiada which may reflect an actual Second Temple practice concerns the dismissal of the gatekeepers on the Sabbath (2 Chr 23,4.8). The explanatory statement that "the priest Jehoiada did not dismiss the divisions" is apparently added in Chronicles to account for how the large number of priests and Levites in the temple all at once was possible. This statement may indicate that the leading priest was

⁽²⁸⁾ Jehoiada restores the Davidic line by ceremonially crowning, anointing and giving the king the "covenant" (2 Chr 23,11); he also allows the line to flourish by acquiring two wives (and thus many children) for Joash (2 Chr 24,3); he is the one who renews the covenant, appoints the levitical priests, and stations the gatekeepers (2 Chr 23,16-21).

⁽²⁹⁾ See, however, the role of Jehoiada in distributing the money collected to pay the temple workers and using it to refurbish the temple in Chronicles. The text of 2 Kgs 12,9-16 is vague about who does what. Chronicles clarifies this by explicitly depicting Jehoiada and the king twice side-by-side in performing these duties (2 Chr 24,12.14). It is unclear whether this is the leading priest operating in royal matters or the king operating in cultic matters.

⁽³⁰⁾ This is another interesting substitution of "Levites" by the Chronicler. His source (2 Kgs 23,2) has "priests." Clearly the Chronicler has a very specific notion of what Levitical duties should entail and takes opportunity to express it.

responsible to oversee the changing of “duty shifts”. Again, a note of exceptional action (this time one not taken) provides evidence of the rule. The leading priest of the Second Temple period may have been normally responsible for this daily activity. If so, this also indicates that the leading priest exercised authority over the Levitical divisions.

That Jehoiada appears to be the leading priest who reflects most what one would expect if the Chronicler was indeed retrojecting Second Temple practice into his narrative may not be accidental. A bit of speculation: if, as suggested above, the Chronicler inserted Johanan into the genealogical list to honor the current high priest of his day, then it is possible that he takes advantage of the similarity of names between Jehoiada (יהוידע) and Joiada (יידע), the father of the current high priest. His sources, as in the case of the genealogy, provide an opportunity to make a connection to his present situation. Virtually nothing whatsoever is known about Joiada outside of his placement in the high-priestly list in Neh 12,8-11.22. It seems likely that he is the Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, whose son marries into the Sanballat family (Neh 13,28)⁽³¹⁾. If so, then the presentation of Jehoiada marrying into the Davidic family may bear some relationship to the text from Nehemiah concerned with improper high-priestly marriage practices.

4. *The Ambiguous Case of the Amariah under Jehoshaphat, possibly Amariah II (1 Chr 6,11)*

The final priest to be discussed is the ambiguous Amariah at the time of Jehoshaphat who may be Amariah II in 1 Chr 6,11. The narrative from 2 Kings has been significantly augmented by the Chronicler, but the chief priest Amariah is far less important than Jehoshaphat and his reforms⁽³²⁾. Jehoshaphat institutes cultic reforms and initiates a program of teaching officials, two priests, and several Levites, but no leading priest, who travel throughout the cities of Judah with the Torah (2 Chr 17,1-9). Continuing his reforms, Jehoshaphat

⁽³¹⁾ Following the arguments for such an identification by VANDERKAM, “Jewish High Priests of the Persian Period”, 70, 82-83, 90-91.

⁽³²⁾ This is consistent with Jehoshaphat’s portrayal in the spirit of David-Solomon; see G.N. KNOPPERS, “Reform and Regression: The Chronicler’s Treatment of Jehoshaphat”, *Bib* 72 (1991) 500-524. This is also consistent with the failure to mention leading priests in any of the reforms by righteous kings except for Josiah (which is consistent with 2 Kgs 22-23).

appoints judges in the cities of Judah (2 Chr 19,5-7)⁽³³⁾ stating that “Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of YHWH; and Zebediah son of Ishmael, the governor (גִּיד) of the house of Judah, in all the king’s matters; and the Levites will serve you as officers” (2 Chr 19,11)⁽³⁴⁾. The Levites are assistants in legal matters to judges who are accountable to a chief priest over cultic issues and to a governor (who is not explicitly a Davidide) over civic matters. Both of these individuals are in turn ultimately responsible to the king. This chief priest is the highest cultic authority; it is also clear that he is *not* involved in civic matters and that he is *not* independent of the Davidic king.

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The two leading priests mentioned in both the genealogy and the narrative do not do very much and have a rather limited role in civic and cultic administration⁽³⁵⁾. They act either within their roles as presented by the Chronicler’s source or within the cultic sphere as a supervisor of priests⁽³⁶⁾. The Chronicler has not overtly enhanced the presentation of the Zadokite high priests in the narrative.

The three chief priests who are not mentioned in the Zadokite

⁽³³⁾ The Chronicler does not specify who these judges were. However, Jehoshaphat continues to appoint judges in Jerusalem who will decide disputed cases. These higher judges are appointed from the Levites, priests, and heads of the families of Israel (2 Chr 19,8). Here Moses’ function as highest judge over disputed cases (as related in Exod 18,13-27) is allocated to multiple leaders from different social locations among the community.

That duties assigned to Moses, and *only* to Moses, in the Torah should be assigned to a variety of individuals is important in larger discussions of Mosaic authority in the Second Temple period and on its own terms in this passage. On the issue of Mosaic authority in the Hebrew Bible and the Second Temple period, see H. NAJMAN, *Seconding Sinai. The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (JSJS 77; Leiden 2003). In this particular passage, the Chronicler has an excellent opportunity to assign an explicitly Mosaic duty to the leading priest, but instead it has been “democratized” to a large extent.

⁽³⁴⁾ This judicial structure is unique in Chronicles, and in the Hebrew Bible as a whole.

⁽³⁵⁾ Zadok is anointed, but acts as the supervisor of only priestly, and not Levitical, duties. Hilkiah has more responsibility: charge of the funds for temple repair, provision of sacrificial portions for the priests under him (though not alone), and some sort of unspecified leadership role in the delegation sent by the king.

⁽³⁶⁾ Zadok and Hilkiah are not responsible for the Levites in addition to the priests. The non-Zadokite chief priests, however, are responsible for the Levites as well as the priests.

genealogy of 1 Chr 6,1-15 are presented with more authority and an increased role in cultic matters. Several details from these narratives could possibly be retrojections of high-priestly responsibilities from the Second Temple period: 1) acting as spokesperson to the civic official on behalf of the cult; 2) being responsible for the actions of all the temple functionaries including the Levites; 3) serving as the leading cultic official who may at times appear to have royal prestige; and 4) overseeing the dismissal of the Levitical gatekeepers on the Sabbath. Even if these items are accepted as retrojections of Second Temple practice, they do not overtly enhance the power and authority of the leading priest into civic matters.

One priest who looks more like the expected presentation of a high priest during the Persian period, Jehoiada, is presented as an exception under extreme circumstances. Perhaps the depiction of this chief priest served as a model of how the government and the cult should function when Davidic kingship was not a viable option. Here the title “chief priest” comes into focus. In Chronicles, the office of “high priest” in the Second Temple period is a continuation of a pre-exilic position termed “chief priest” which was not held continually by Zadokites. It seems that if the Chronicler’s audience wished to see a Second Temple high priest, they were directed to this non-Zadokite chief priest as the closest model.

It has been suggested that the Chronicler did not hope for a restoration of the Davidic dynasty⁽³⁷⁾. Rather, the Persian kings have taken over this role⁽³⁸⁾. If this is correct, the judicial structure

⁽³⁷⁾ See K.E. POMYKALA, “1–2 Chronicles”, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism. Its History and Significance for Messianism* (SBL. Early Judaism and Its Literature 7; Atlanta 1995) 69-111. That the Davidic king has a cultic significance in Chronicles is exceedingly clear; see A.G. AULD, *Kings Without Privilege. David and Moses in the Story of the Bible’s Kings* (Edinburgh 1994); S.J. DE VRIES, “Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles”, *JBL* 107 (1988) 619-639; and W. RILEY, *King and Cultus in Chronicles. Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSS 160; Sheffield 1993).

⁽³⁸⁾ See RILEY, *King and Cultus in Chronicles*, 139-149, and especially 203; E. BEN ZVI, “When the Foreign Monarch Speaks”, *The Chronicler as Author. Studies in Text and Texture* (ed. M.P. GRAHAM – S.L. MCKENZIE) (JSOTSS 263; Sheffield 1999) 209-228. For the Chronicler, the promises to David apply to the people of Israel and God has appointed Persia as his instrument just as the prophet Isaiah regarded the actions of Assyria as occurring as a result of God’s control over history (Isa 10,5) and as Second Isaiah claimed concerning God’s election of Cyrus for the divine purpose (Isa 44,24–45,13) and applied the “everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David” to the people of Israel (Isa 55,3).

represented by the Davidic king Jehoshaphat with a chief priest over cultic matters and a non-Davidide governor over civic matters may be a parallel to the Chronicler's actual historical situation: a Persian king with a high priest over the cult and an appointed governor over civic affairs⁽³⁹⁾. In addition to the non-Zadokite Jehoiada, this Amariah of ambiguous lineage, serves as a model for the role of Second Temple high priests by delineating the scope of their duties, but without a clear presentation of their ceremonial role in the operation of the cult. In Chronicles, the high (and chief) priest is the chief cultic official, the final authority in cultic matters, but only in cultic matters; thus, Chronicles does not provide evidence for an independent high priest or even of one involved in the administration of civic affairs.

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SUMMARY

The high and chief priests mentioned in both the genealogy of 1 Chr 6,1-15 and the narrative of Chronicles (Zadok and Hilkiah) are compared with priests mentioned only in the narrative (the Azariah under Uzziah, the Azariah under Hezekiah, and Jehoiada); the Amariah under Jehoshaphat, possibly Amariah II in 1 Chr 6,11, is treated separately. This article concludes: Chronicles has not enhanced the Zadokite high priests; the three priests not mentioned in the genealogy are presented with increased cultic roles which delineate some of their duties; leading priests in Chronicles operate within the cultic sphere while their precise ceremonial role is unclear.

⁽³⁹⁾ A similar suggestion is made by ROOKE, *Zadok's Heirs*, 208.

ANIMADVERSIONES

What Kind of a Sign are Vultures? Luke 17,37b

Although the proverb ὅπου τὸ σῶμα, ἐκεῖ καὶ οἱ ἀετοὶ ἐπισυναχθήσονται has not attracted enough attention to qualify as a noted *crux interpretum*⁽¹⁾, its meaning continues to elude exegetes. But, while the proverb seems enigmatic in the mouth of Jesus, or in Q, or in Matt 24,28, a more attentive literary analysis of Luke's use of the proverb and of his shaping of its literary context may provide clues to its meaning in Jesus' eschatological discourse in Luke 17,20-37.

1. The History of Research

The History of Research, carried on mostly in commentaries, agrees on only one point — the proverb is enigmatic. Comments have centered around two issues: a) Does it speak of eagles or vultures? b) On what is it commenting, and so what does it mean?

A. Modern authors agree that Hebrew נֶשֶׁר and Greek ἀετός can mean either eagle or vulture. Almost all choose “vultures” because, although eagles can eat carrion, it is characteristic of vultures to do so⁽²⁾. Authors who hold out for eagles are those who see in them a reference to the eagles on the standards of the Roman army when it destroys Jerusalem⁽³⁾, and those who argue that Greek has and uses a distinctive word for vulture, γύψ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ From the rise of modern exegetical periodical literature up to 2001 only three articles have treated it: R. THIBAUT, “Le Proverbe des Vautours et du Cadavre”, *NRT* 58 (1931) 57-58; J. DE MARCHI, “Ubi cumque fuerit corpus, ibi congregabuntur et aquilae”, *VD* (1938) 329-33; H.O. GUENTHER, “When ‘Eagles’ Draw Together”, *Forum* 5 (1989) 140-50. However research on the eschatological discourse in Luke 17,20-37 often treats it; see B. RIGAUX, “La petite apocalypse de Luc (XVII, 22-37)”, *Ecclesia a Spiritu Sancto edocta, Lumen Gentium* 53 (BETL 27; Gembloux 1970) 407-438; R. SCHNACKENBURG, “Der eschatologische Abschnitt Lk 17,20-37”, *Mélanges bibliques en hommage au R. P. Bédarigaux* (eds. A. DESCAMPS – A. DE HALLAEUX) (Gembloux 1970) 213-34; J. ZMIJEWSKI, *Die Eschatologiereden des Lukas Evangeliums: eine traditions- und redaktions-geschichtliche Untersuchung zu Lk 21,5-36 und Lk 17,20-37* (BBB 40; Bonn 1972) 326-540; R. GEIGER, *Die Lukanischen Endzeitsreden. Studien zur Eschatologie des Lukas-Evangeliums* (Bern – Frankfurt 1973); M. MORGEN, “Lc 17,20-37 et Lc 21,8-11,20-24: arrière-fond scripturaire”, *The Scriptures in the Gospels* (ed. C.M. TUCKETT) (BETL 131; Louvain 1997) 307-326.

⁽²⁾ So THIBAUT, “Le Proverbe”, 57, DE MARCHI, “Ubi cumque”, 330-31. Most clear among commentators on Luke are A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Luke* (ICC; Edinburgh 1922), A. LOISY *L'Évangile selon Luc* (Paris 1924), I.H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Exeter 1978) and C.F. EVANS, *Saint Luke* (TPINTC; Philadelphia 1990).

⁽³⁾ Most clearly A.R.C. LEANEY, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke* (BNTC; London 1958) and perhaps F. DANKER, *Jesus and the New Age* (Philadelphia 1988).

⁽⁴⁾ F. BOVON, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas III/3* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 2001).

B. The Fathers and exegetes up to the twentieth century, usually construing the context from where the proverb occurs in Matt 24,28, either allegorized sinners as the body and the Son of Man come in judgment as the vultures, or took the Son of Man as the body and the vultures as the elect gathering around him. In either case, they were uncomfortable with the identification of Jesus⁽⁵⁾.

In the twentieth century, commentaries on Luke took as the context of the proverb the whole eschatological discourse, with its emphasis on the Son of Man as judge⁽⁶⁾. Following on the disciples' question, "Where?" it denies the relevance of the question⁽⁷⁾, denies that the coming of the Son of Man can be observed beforehand⁽⁸⁾, or denies a specific locality for the event⁽⁹⁾. Sometimes commentators shade the denial into a slightly more specific meaning: when the conditions are fulfilled, the Son of Man will be revealed⁽¹⁰⁾; judgment will occur where it is required⁽¹¹⁾, or even *when* it is required⁽¹²⁾. For the plurality of recent commentaries, when the Son of Man appears the disciples will be as sure of where he is as vultures are sure of the place of the cadaver, i.e. they will no more need a special sign than do the vultures⁽¹³⁾.

2. The Vocabulary of the Proverb

Σῶμα here means dead body, corpse, as it had done in Greek literature from the time of Homer to the New Testament⁽¹⁴⁾. The vexed word is ἄετοι, which can mean eagle or vulture, just as does נָשָׂר, the Hebrew word it always translates in the LXX (KB, 641; BAGD, 19). Scientific treatises, such as Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* distinguish the eagle (ἄετός) from the vulture (γῶψ)⁽¹⁵⁾, as do the technical biblical lists of clean and unclean birds (the LXX

(5) THIBAUT, "Le Proverbe", 57-58. DE MARCHI, "Ubi cumque", 332-33, shows Hippolytus, Cyril of Alexandria, Euthymius Zigabenus, Ambrose, and Bede explaining why the Savior is so described.

(6) Already in the nineteenth century A. JUELICHER, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (Tübingen 1899) I, 136, construed the disciples' "where?" with the "here" and "there" where the Son of Man will appear (v. 23).

(7) C.F. EVANS, *Saint Luke* (TPINTC London 1990).

(8) E.J. TINSLEY, *The Gospel according to Luke* (CNEB; Cambridge 1965).

(9) F. HAUCK, *Evangelium des Lukas* (ThHK; Leipzig 1934), J. ERNST, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (RNT; Regensburg 1977).

(10) PLUMMER, *S. Luke*.

(11) HAUCK, *Lukas*; K. RENGSTORF, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (NTD; Göttingen 1937); E. ELLIS, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI 1966).

(12) T. ZAHN, *Das Evangelium des Lukas* (Leipzig 1920); N. GELDENHUYS, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1951), J.M. CREED, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (London 1930).

(13) R. KARRIS, *Invitation to Luke* (Garden City, NJ 1977); J. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, (AB28; Garden City, NJ 1981); W. SCHMITHALS, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (ZB; Zürich 1980); EVANS, *Saint Luke*; J. GREEN, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1997).

(14) See the first meaning of σῶμα in BAGD, 799. In a forthcoming study from Sheffield Academic Press, Stephen BRIDGES argues that the proverb in Q had πῶμα, which Luke changed to the less morbid σῶμα. Possible, but it is more likely that Q had σῶμα as the more common term of proverbial speech, and Matthew has specified the original meaning with his πῶμα.

(15) The principal comparisons of the two occur in VI, 5-6 (563a5-b13), VIII 3 (592b1-11), IX 11 (615a8,20), and especially IX 32 (618b18-619a13).

of Lev 11,13; Deut 14,12), but in ordinary speech ἀετός describes both birds⁽¹⁶⁾. The unreflective person cannot distinguish one from another in flight, and observers in the ancient world knew that both birds ate carrion⁽¹⁷⁾. Thus, in lexical semantics, the paradigmatic meaning of ἀετός is “a soaring bird of prey.” Then the relationships supplied by context would determine its more precise syntagmatic meaning⁽¹⁸⁾.

Some clarifications from ornithology might help interpreters and translators specify what Luke may have meant⁽¹⁹⁾. The *Accipitridae* are birds of prey, including hawks, eagles, and Old World vultures⁽²⁰⁾. Eagles are territorial birds, hunting tracts of land by themselves or with their partner. They are equipped with strong feet and talons for striking and gripping live prey and ripping their kill. Old World vultures have weak feet and talons, and so exist off carrion. In general, then, eagles and hawks kill their prey; vultures are scavengers.

A few species of eagles, however, eat a fair amount of carrion. This is mostly opportunistic or need-based behavior (for example, during winter when live prey is scarce). But, as territorial birds, they do not feed in flocks on the same carcass; they will drive off all others if they can. Though in dire necessity vultures will take live prey, they feed almost exclusively on carrion. They congregate around carrion, and many eat at one time on the same carcass⁽²¹⁾.

Popular proverbial speech is based on general behavior, not on the distinctions of scientists, and so when a proverb describes an ἀετός as attacking living prey, it is an eagle; when it gathers to feed in a flock on a single carcass, it is a vulture. Our proverb, with its added syntagmatic relationships of carrion and, especially, of the gathering of the flock around one body, may be one of the clearest examples of ἀετός used of vultures in Greek and biblical literature. In Luke 17,37, then, where the ἀετοί congregate about a single dead body, Jesus means vultures⁽²²⁾.

There are three, or perhaps four, vultures which inhabit or visit Israel today. The most common is the Griffon Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), measuring about 40” from head to tip of tail, with a long neck. Its beak is not large or

⁽¹⁶⁾ Exod 19,4; Deut 28,49; Ezek 17,3; Hab 1,8 describe the eagle’s power and speed; Job 39,30; Prov 30,17; Mic 1,16 describe carrion-eating vultures. See also DE MARCHI, “Ubicumque”, 330. Even Aristotle includes vultures (the Percnopteros and Lammergeier) among the ἀετοί in *Hist. Anim.* IX, 32.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.* IX 32,2; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* X, 3, 8.

⁽¹⁸⁾ For a relatively simple description of these terms see M. SILVA, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI 1983), especially 119-120, 141-143.

⁽¹⁹⁾ The following remarks are drawn from *Handbook of Birds of the World* (ed. J. DEL HOYO – A. ELLIOTT – J. SARGATAL) (Barcelona 1994), II, 52-205 and M.L. GROSSMAN – J. HAMLET, *Birds of Prey of the World* (New York 1964) 331-346.

⁽²⁰⁾ What the American reader knows as vultures are *Cathartidae*, which do not exist outside of the Americas. They are related to storks, but, by convergent evolution, they closely resemble Old World vultures in size, looks, sociability, and eating habits.

⁽²¹⁾ Incidentally, many exegetes speak of vultures being drawn to the carcass by scent. Old World vultures, unlike New World *Cathartidae*, have no sense of smell; they find the carcass by sight.

⁽²²⁾ Pace LEANEY, Luke is not looking forward here to the destruction of Jerusalem by Roman legions with eagles on their standards, since he separates the destruction of Jerusalem (21,20-24) from the days of the Son of Man (21,25-28).

sharp enough to tear carcasses. It eats only flesh and viscera. Also common is the Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), much smaller at about 22"-25". It has very weak feet and beak. It is omnivorous, including excrement and garbage in its diet, and is a frequent visitor to town and village streets. Also common is the Lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*), which much resembles the eagle, with feathered head, prehensile feet with talons, and a large curved beak. It is 39"-42" long, but, as a bird whose diet is principally bones, frequently waits for the smaller vultures to strip the bones of meat and sinews. Finally, the African Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotus*), has a sub-species resident in the southern Negev. It is 37" to 42" long, has a pinkish head and neck and a huge beak, capable of tearing open hippos, elephants, or rhinos. It is large enough to dominate the pecking order and eats whenever it wants. In Jesus' own day the Eurasian Black Vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) was common. It is 36"-39" long, with a heavy raptorial beak and prehensile feet.

Frequently exegetes single out either the Griffon Vulture or the Lammergeier as the bird of the proverb. But this misses the zoological reality, and so the meaning of the proverb. A large body usually attracts two or three genera of vultures, because they collaborate in stripping the corpse. The pecking order is determined by the size and strength of the beak, so that those with larger beaks rip open the skin and eat first. Then the vultures with smaller beaks enter the carcass and eat the meat and viscera, and the Lammergeier finishes up the bones. Thus the proverb speaks probably of different genera of vultures flying together from diverse nesting grounds to collaborate in stripping the carcass.

But identifying the birds of the proverb does not clarify its meaning, and so we need to investigate the context in which the proverb lies and the metaphoric meaning of the proverb itself.

3. The Literary Context of the Proverb

Commentators and exegetes who have studied the eschatological discourse are divided about the exact context in which to interpret the proverb. Some, following the lead of Juelicher and the Fathers, interpret ποῦ as referring to the coming of the Son of Man, or see it as correlating with the πότε of the Pharisees, and so functioning as a summary of the entire discourse (Plummer, Creed, Danker, Fitzmyer, Guenther, "Eagles" 143, Evans, Green). Others (Hauck, J. Schmid, Grundmann)⁽²³⁾ have interpreted it from its placement after 17,34-35, so that ποῦ asks about the place in the judgment where some have been left (ἀφεθήσεται). Schlatter⁽²⁴⁾ notes that it also asks the place of those who have been taken (παράλημψήσεται).

J. Zmijewski has written the most thorough study of Luke's use of the proverb in *Eschatologiereden*, 506-518. He first notes that 17,37a is Luke's introductory formula

⁽²³⁾ J. SCHMID, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (RNT; Regensburg 1955); W. GRUNDMANN, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (ThHK; East Berlin 1961).

⁽²⁴⁾ A. SCHLATTER, *Das Evangelium des Lukas* (Stuttgart 1931).

1) to connect the displaced proverb in a new place, 2) to end the whole speech from 17,22-35, and 3) to echo the Pharisee's question in 17,20, and so round off the unit. Therefore the meaning of the proverb itself will reflect each of these functions (215)⁽²⁵⁾.

For Zmijewski, the proverb must first and foremost be understood in its immediate context as an application of 17,34-35⁽²⁶⁾, the verses which introduce the notion of divine judgment into the discourse⁽²⁷⁾. The proverb answers the question of where the final judgment will take place. The proverb then asserts that the divine judgment is universal: wherever humans (the corpse) are, judgment will occur (216).

But the disciples' question relates to more than the judgment in 17,34-35. Zmijewski asserts that the whole discourse, beginning with the "here" and "there" of v.23, has notions of locality running through it. Thus the disciples' question becomes a response to cues in the discourse. Throughout the discourse Jesus is not denying the notion of place, but only false perceptions of it. Thus the proverb responds to all these local notices by saying that the Reign of God as the Son of Man's final judgment will occur everywhere. And so the disciples' *ποῦ* responds to the Pharisees' *πότε* in rounding off the discourse.

But Zmijewski has over-emphasized the local references throughout the discourse. Most often, the references to place reveal nothing more than the simple fact that time and space go together in our world: at a given time one is in a determinate place, and one can be in a given place only at a specific time. In all cases, the reference to place is subordinated to a concern for the time of the arrival of the Reign of God or the Son of Man. Thus, in 17,21 Jesus' uses place references *ἰδοὺ ὧδε* "Look: here!" and *ἐν τῷς ὑμῶν*. But as these are in response to the Pharisees' question *πότε*, his answer does not refer to the place of the arrival of the reign of God, but an affirmation that it is *now* present in Jesus' person and works. In 17,23 the "there" and "here" do not refer to a place so much as to the presence of the Son of Man on one of his *days* (17,22). V. 24 continues the temporal emphasis of the *day* of the Son of Man⁽²⁸⁾ by illustrating its suddenness. In 17,24 Noah's entering the ark is simply a designator of the *day* on which the rains unexpectedly wiped out his neighbors. Similarly the local reference to Lot's leaving Sodom is only a designation of the *day* on which fire and brimstone destroyed its inhabitants, and v. 30 explicitly states that these two ancient examples are illustrations of the temporally unexpected revelation (cf. *οὐκ...μετὰ παρατηρήσεως*, 17,20) of the Son of Man. In sum, the local references up to 17,37 display no interest in place; they simply designate the times at which divine interventions occur. In these sixteen verses (17,20-35) temporal terms occur eleven or twelve

⁽²⁵⁾ This multiple function had also been affirmed by RIGAUX, "Apocalypse", 431 and SCHNACKENBURG, "Abschnitt", 226.

⁽²⁶⁾ SCHNACKENBURG, "Abschnitt", 226 and GEIGER, "Endzeitreden", 71-72 agree.

⁽²⁷⁾ But MORGEN, "Lc 17,20-37", develops the argument of J. SCHLOSSER, "Les jours de Noé et Lot. À propos de Lc xvii,26-30", *RB* 80 (1973) 13-36 that Luke 17,26-30 had already introduced the notion of judgment into the discourse. This seems more correct.

⁽²⁸⁾ Whether one reads *ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτοῦ* with *ⲥ A Θ* or omits it with *ⲡ⁵ B D* it is irrelevant. The topic is still the day of the Son of Man as object of the disciples' desire in 17,22.

times⁽²⁹⁾; the whole discourse throbs with expectation of the day of the arrival of the Son of Man's judgment and the arrival of the perfect Reign of God.

The besetting problem which leads to this over-emphasis is Zmijewski's decision to make the immediate context of the proverb (the sayings on judgment in 17,34-35) determine the meaning of the proverb for the speech as a whole. But this procedure is dubious here, for two reasons. First, the disciples' question and Jesus' proverbial answer in 17,37 do not flow naturally out of 17,34-35; both a casual and a critical reader experience a disconcerting break between 17,35 and 17,37. The *ποῦ*, without any predicate or substantives, remains undefined, unconnected to 17,34-35. Further, if Luke had wanted to anchor the proverb in 17,34-35 he could have done so by changing the singular *σῶμα* to the plural *σώματα* "corpses" to refer to the bodies "being left" and "being taken" in 17,34-35⁽³⁰⁾. For these reasons commentators have taken the proverb to refer to the whole discourse's question about the time and signs of the Son of Man's return as judge to usher in the reign of God.

Secondly, if, as Zmijewski himself and many commentators say⁽³¹⁾, Luke really meant the disciples' question to echo the Pharisees' question in 17,20, and so to have the proverb conclude and round off the discourse, then the whole discourse in 17,20-37 is surely the better context in which to interpret the proverb⁽³²⁾. Consequently, our exegesis will proceed from a new examination of the context of the sermon as a whole.

The remote context of 17,20-37 is the journey narrative (9,51-19,44)⁽³³⁾. On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus teaches the way of discipleship, applying the ethics of the Sermon on the Plain (6,20-49)⁽³⁴⁾.

The proximate context of the proverb is the Pharisees' question, which provokes the discourse: "When is the Reign of God coming?"⁽³⁵⁾ Jesus'

⁽²⁹⁾ *πότε* once, *ἡμέρα(ι)* nine or ten times, depending on the reading of 17:24, and *νυκτί* once.

⁽³⁰⁾ A critic of the first draft of this paper unconsciously validated this expectation by pointing out that the context in 17,34-35 "leaves some bodies on the ground" (my emphasis).

⁽³¹⁾ Besides the commentaries just mentioned, see also RIGAUX, "Apocalypse", 431; MORGEN, "Lc 17,20-37", 316; and even SCHNACKENBURG, "Abschnitt", 226.

⁽³²⁾ One expects writers on rhetoric to define interpretative contexts in their analysis of arrangement. But Book VII of Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria*, on arrangement, is not concerned with this issue, and modern authors on rhetoric, such as C. PERELMAN and L. OLBRECHTS-TYTECA *The New Rhetoric* (Notre Dame, IN 1969) are primarily interested in invention, not arrangement.

⁽³³⁾ This second of three eschatological discourses in Luke (12,35-59; 17,20-37; 21,5-38) comes shortly after the sentence which reminds the reader that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem (17,11), which opens the last third of the journey narrative (17,11-19,44).

⁽³⁴⁾ Ethics and eschatology are closely intertwined throughout the journey. There is ethical content in 17,20-36 itself — attention to the self-denying ethics of the Reign of God (17,25,33).

⁽³⁵⁾ Perhaps the Pharisees expect that Reign to break out in Jerusalem as they see Jesus nearing it, as Luke explicitly says in 19,11. Luke's veteran readers know that this Reign will enter a new phase with Jesus' exodus (9,31), his being taken up (9,51) in his death, resurrection, and ascension (Acts 1,2-11), and in the disciples' baptism in his Spirit in Jerusalem (Acts 1,4-8; 2,1-13). Thus God's Reign in Luke is a three-phase phenomenon — present in Jesus' works, coming soon in the life of his disciples (9,27), and coming to completion at the end of time (21,31); see my *Children of a Compassionate God*. A

answer that there will be no signs of (the time of) its arrival (17,20c) is the topic sentence for the whole discourse. He gives two reasons for this denial: 1) God's Reign will not arrive after signs of its future coming⁽³⁶⁾ because it is already present among them (17,21d). But, turning to his disciples, he takes up their longings for a future and perfect Reign corresponding to the Pharisees' expectation. He equates that Reign with one of the days of the Son of Man (17,22) and tells them that he will not appear where "observers" want to point him out (17,23). This day will have no advance signs, because 2) it will come as suddenly as lightning flashes across the whole sky (17,24). Not only is there no way of predicting when the first (or subsequent) bolts of lightning will occur, but the first appearance of it does not presage its nearly simultaneous occurrence elsewhere in the sky, for it fills up the whole sky instantaneously⁽³⁷⁾. The argument of the whole discourse is that the appearance of the Reign of God will be so sudden that there will be no time to say, "Here it is!" In 17,26-30 Jesus gives two examples from the Jewish tradition which emphasize the unexpectedness and suddenness of the coming of the Son of Man. Just as unexpectedly as the flood, and the fire and brimstone, caught Noah and Lot's neighbors in eating, drinking, marrying, buying and selling, planting and building — all natural events expecting and promoting continuity in life — so the day of the Son of Man, by its suddenness, will catch the disciples without advance warning. When disaster suddenly threatens, one spontaneously grabs one's most treasured possession before fleeing, but Jesus reinforces the suddenness and immediacy of that day by injunctions not to gather up their belongings (17,31), nor look back at the life they are leaving (17,32). What they are going into is a different life than the one they are clinging to (17,33). Presumably one shares an imminent fate with one's bedfellow, or with one's partner at work, but the Son of Man's judgment will take one and leave the other so suddenly that they will have no chance to change their status (17,34-35).

Luke concludes the speech (and provides the immediate context for the proverb) with the obtuse question of his disciples, whose "Where?" echoes the Pharisees' "When?" already so clearly rejected by Jesus⁽³⁸⁾. When the whole context speaks of suddenness, and the absence of signs, this asking for the location jolts the reader. If this question echoes that of the Pharisees, the reader should expect Jesus to reply, "Neither are there indications of the place". That Jesus does not so reply, could reveal a Jesus exasperated by their dullness: an uncomprehending question gets an incomprehensible answer.

Theological Exegesis of Luke 6:20-49 (Collegeville, MN 2001) 87-95. The day of the Son of Man is Luke's preferred designation for this final stage of the Reign (17,22.24.26.30; 21,27.31).

⁽³⁶⁾ οὐκ...μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, "without observation", means not subject to advance warning (BAGD, 622).

⁽³⁷⁾ From the perspective of Lukan eschatology, 17,25 seems to be the same kind of warning that this day is not imminent as is the explicit warning in 21,9d, which also follows false claims of the presence of the messiah.

⁽³⁸⁾ "Question saugrenue" in THIBAUT, "Vautours", 58. The disciples had already heard Jesus' previous rejection of signs in 11,20-32. This correlation of when and where in a space-time continuum makes their question a rhetorical conclusion of the discourse, but it still leaves the disciples looking clueless about what Jesus had been saying.

The proverb is either a riddle to shut them up, or a more figurative denial that a particular place can be assigned⁽³⁹⁾.

But the human mind is reluctant to accept a riddle and wants to understand the proverb. Further, if the reader is consistent, she wants to know how the proverb serves as the conclusion of the sermon. Perhaps there is something in the intrinsic intelligibility of the figure that might provide these understandings.

4. *The Figurative Meaning of the Proverb*

Since the proverb reflects the natural world of birds and feeding, natural responses are at the base of the proverb. "Where the corpse is, vultures will gather" points to the stimulus/response that brings vultures to the place of the carrion. It is the automatic response of unblocked instinct, and so the figure emphasizes sureness. Contemporary exegetes who relate the proverb to its immediate context in 17,34-35 assert that Jesus is telling the disciples that the quest for a certain place is unnecessary. They will no more need a special sign than do the vultures: they will recognize the Son of Man wherever he appears with the same surety with which the vulture finds the carrion. In that way, Jesus' proverbial response echoes the response he gives to the Pharisees' question: the specific place is irrelevant.

But this interpretation cannot function as a conclusion to all the emphasis on the suddenness and unknowability of the time, which dominated the whole eschatological speech. Is there, in the response of vultures to carrion, a temporal meaning which would respond more closely to the temporal emphasis of the speech as a whole?

Here the polysemic character of all figurative language comes into play. Exact literal speech might limit Jesus' answer to "Where" to a local meaning for 17,34-35. But a polysemic expression like a proverb can respond not only to the local meaning suggested by the disciples' question, but can also suggest another aspect of the vultures' flocking to carrion which could summarize Jesus' evocation of temporal urgency throughout all of 17,21-35. A temporal meaning would correspond to the inevitable linking of space and time in human thought and expression. What is there in vultures' behavior which might speak to Jesus' denial of signs for the eschatological arrival of the Son of Man in the perfect Reign of God?

Timing itself provides the clue. Vultures arrive at the scene after death has taken place, or the animal is already irreversibly dying, is already "dead meat." Vultures are a *post factum* sign that an event (an animal's death) has already occurred. In that case, the proverb about vultures fits Jesus' purposes perfectly in Luke 17,20-37⁽⁴⁰⁾. Jesus has responded to the Pharisees that the final Reign of God will not come with advance signs subject to human observation (17,20). He expands this reply for his disciples, giving examples

⁽³⁹⁾ That Luke does not share Mark's critical view of the disciples may exclude this interpretation, but the proverb still could convey the puzzling character of a riddle.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ This interpretation sublates the local meaning of the proverb in its immediate context by putting it to work in Luke's larger temporal context, and so it makes sense of the speech as a whole.

of suddenness and unexpectedness which do not allow for signs (17,23-29). When the day arrives, they are to reverse normal human practices, for the judgment will be surprising, and immediate (17,31-36). When the disciples, in spite of this absolute and clear denial that there will be prior signs, nevertheless ask for a local sign of the event, Jesus gives them a *post factum* sign which bears out what he has been saying all along: that there are no prior signs of the arrival of the final reign of God. They will know the when and where of it, but only after the process has irreversibly begun⁽⁴¹⁾.

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SUMMARY

The only consensus about the meaning of Jesus' proverb in Q, Matthew or Luke is that it is enigmatic. But closer attention to the trope itself and its literary context may give clues to its meaning in Luke 17. The two principal pre-occupations of exegetes are 1) whether *aetoi* means eagles or vultures, and 2) how to define the literary context in which the proverb is to be read: does it refer to the coming day of the Son of Man (17,22-34) or of the last judgment (17,34-35)? This paper argues that *aetoi* here must mean vultures and the appropriate context for the interpretation of the proverb is the whole speech, for which it serves as the conclusion. There is a curious interplay between the Pharisees' "When" (v. 20) and the "Where?" (v. 37a) of the disciples. Attending to the polysemic possibilities of the proverb provides a meaning which knits the whole speech together.

⁽⁴¹⁾ As I was finishing this article, I discovered to my delight that, about the same time I had this insight into the meaning of the proverb, so did F.B. CRADDOCK, *Luke* (Interpretation; Louisville 1990). "Both the where and the when of the parousia will be known after it occurs, not before. It is after a prey is dead that one sees the gathering of vultures" (p. 207).

A Note on Qoh 8,12b-13

Qoh 8,12b-13 has been a perennial source of controversy among Qohelet experts⁽¹⁾. This is mainly due to the fact that the section seems to contradict its immediate context and the book's generally skeptical tenor as a whole. Qohelet, throughout the book, consistently questions the deed/consequence connection (*Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang*) (e.g., 7,15) that moral behavior is intricately attached to fortune. But here Qohelet seems to make such a connection: God-fearing is linked with prosperity and wickedness with short life. Here is the unit (in italics for emphasis) within its larger context.

11: Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the human heart is fully set to do evil.

12: Though sinners do evil a hundred times and prolong their lives, yet I know that *it will be well with those who fear God, because they stand in fear before him.*

13: *But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will they prolong their days like a shadow, because they do not stand in fear before God.*

14: There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people who are treated according to the conduct of the wicked, and there are wicked people who are treated according to the conduct of the righteous. I said that this is also a vanity.

15: So I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun⁽²⁾.

It was once popular to view Qoh 8,12b-13 as a gloss (added by the hand of someone other than Qohelet) meant to counter the skeptical context (8,11-12a. 14)⁽³⁾. A more current position holds that the unit is the citation, by Qohelet, of a traditional saying that assumes the deed/consequence connection, which he then rejects or relativizes in v. 14⁽⁴⁾. The verses are said to contradict their

⁽¹⁾ I would like to thank Julie Chisholm (Shallowater High School, Texas) for her translation of the relevant section of the Ravasi commentary.

⁽²⁾ All verse citations are from the *New Revised Standard Version* (N.p. 1989).

⁽³⁾ Modern interpreters who subscribe to the glossator explanation are J. CRENSHAW, *Ecclesiastes. A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia 1987) 48; H. MÜLLER, "Theonome Skepsis und Lebensfreude — Zu Koh 1,12–3,15", *BZ NF* 30/1 (1986) 16, n. 70. This view was typical of earlier commentators (G. BARTON, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* [ICC; Edinburgh 1908] 154).

⁽⁴⁾ R. GORDIS, *Koheleth — The Man and his World. A Study of Ecclesiastes* (New York 1968) 105; J. LOADER, *Ecclesiastes. A Practical Commentary* (trans. J. VRIEND; Text and Interpretation; Grand Rapids 1986) 101; R. MURPHY, *Ecclesiastes* (WBC 23a; Dallas 1992) 85; R. WHYBRAY, *Ecclesiastes* (NCB; Grand Rapids 1989) 135-38; T. ZIMMER, *Zwischen Tod und Lebenglück. Eine Untersuchung zur Anthropologie Kohelets* (BZAW 286; Berlin 1999) 205-206; D. MICHEL, *Qohelet* (Erträge der Forschung 258; Darmstadt 1988) 155-156; P. BEENTJES, "Some Notes on Qohelet 8,1-15", *Qohelet in the Context of Wisdom* (ed. A. SCHOORS) (BETL 86; Leuven 1998) 313-314; R. SCOTT, *Proverbs. Ecclesiastes* (AB 18; Garden City 1965) 242-243; L. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER, "Via

context (vv. 11, 14), which questions the connection. And, in addition, it is pointed out that Qohelet regularly cites traditional sounding sayings and then either relativizes or rejects them. For example, Hertzberg argues that Qohelet is fond of quoting a saying that is presumed true ("Zwar-Tatsache") to which is added a saying that reflects Qohelet's own view ("Aber-Tatsache")⁽⁵⁾. The effect is to relativize both. Hertzberg provides the following examples: 1,16 against 17-18; 2,3-9, especially 10, against 11; 2,13-14a against 14b-17; 3,11a against 11b; 3,17 against 18-22; 4,13-16a against 16b; 7,11-12 against 7; 8,12b-13 against 14-15; 9,4b against 5; 9,16a against 16b; 9,17-18a against 18b, 10,1; 10,2-4 against 5-7. Hertzberg views 8,12b-13 as the "Zwar"-statement and a traditional saying that Qohelet does not outright reject⁽⁶⁾. However, he adds the "Aber"-statement to both supplement the traditional saying and push it further to the periphery (vv.14-15).

A different tack is taken by T. Longman who believes the verses are, indeed, Qohelet's own sentiment but that he is being typically contradictory⁽⁷⁾. A few maintain that it is his sentiment but that the contradiction is between his faith in God's justice (vv. 12b-13) and reality (v. 14)⁽⁸⁾.

In this note, I will argue, to the contrary, that vv. 12b-13 are Qohelet's own sentiment and are not the citation of a traditional saying and that this is not an instance of dialectic. I will also argue that they neither contradict vv. 11-12a, nor vv. 14-15, nor any other statement by the author⁽⁹⁾.

Vv. 12b-13 do not conflict with vv. 11-12a. They are appropriately modified by vv. 11-12a. They describe the delay in divine punishment for evil, which encourages humans to continue in wickedness. They then constitute a concessive clause that modifies the main clause, vv. 12b-13, which supplies Qohelet's main thought.

Qohelet is, in effect, counseling against the foolishness of continued sin because judgment will eventually occur, though delayed. This is comparable to Qohelet's statements about God's judgment of humans (3,17; 11,9; cf. 8,6)⁽¹⁰⁾. It is also consistent with 7,17 ("Do not be too wicked, and do not be a fool; why should you die before your time?"), which warns of the mortal dangers of excessive wickedness and folly. Nowhere in the book does

Media: Kohelet 7,15-18 und die griechisch-hellenistische Philosophie", *Qohelet in the Context*, 192, n. 39; N. LOHFINK, *Qoheleth* (trans. Sean McEvenue) (Continental; Minneapolis 2003) 108; G. RAVASI, *Qohelet* (La parola di Dio; Milano 1991) 272-273.

⁽⁵⁾ H. HERTZBERG, *Der Prediger* (KAT 17/4; Gütersloh 1963) 30.

⁽⁶⁾ Ibid., 174.

⁽⁷⁾ T. LONGMAN, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids 1998) 219-220.

⁽⁸⁾ M. FOX, *A Time to Tear Down and A Time to Build Up. A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids 1999) 286; C. SEOW, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York 1997) 288; E. TAMEZ, *When the Horizons Close. Rereading Ecclesiastes* (Maryknoll 2000) 108-110; A. BARUCCO, *Ecclesiaste (qoheleth)*. Traduction et commentaire (VS; Paris 1968) 152-153.

⁽⁹⁾ Three other authors hold to this view (J. PEDERSEN, "Scepticisme israélite", *RHPR* 10 [1930] 360; W. BROWN, *Ecclesiastes* [Interpretation; Louisville 2000] 88-89; id., *Character in Crisis. A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids 1996] 145-146; T. KRÜGER, "Theologische Gegenwartsdeutung im Kohelet-Buch" [Habilitationsschrift; Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität 1990] 351-355) but their explanations are distinct from mine, and they have not engaged the standard interpretations in any substantial way.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Krüger identifies this judgment as the "transitoriness of the human", which all deserve since none is morally perfect (7,20) ("Theologische Gegenwartsdeutung", 321).

Qohelet counsel the practice of wickedness, though he views the deed/consequence connection as problematic (v. 14). Thus, 8,12b-13 is a proper response in supplying motivation for avoiding wickedness in spite of delayed consequence: "it will be well with those who fear God". So though appearances suggest one might venture into the life of wickedness, Qohelet is saying that this is an illusion: consequence is on its way; it is just delayed.

וּמֵאֲרִיךְ לָם ("and prolong their lives" [v. 12a]) does not conflict with וְלֹא יֵאֲרִיךְ יָמֵם כַּצֶּל ("neither will they prolong their days like a shadow" [v. 13b]). As G. Barton argues, the former statement should be understood as the author's way of expressing the exception to the general rule, represented by the latter⁽¹¹⁾. According to Qohelet, generally, for the God-fearer, "it will be well", though this may not appear to be the case.

Vv. 12b-13 do not conflict with v. 14, both formally and content-wise. Formally, v. 14 begins a new discussion. In v. 14a, this is indicated by the use of הַבֵּל, which is repeated in v. 14c, with the addition of גַּם ("also"). הַבֵּל is a leitmotif of the book and often used by Qohelet as a concluding or opening evaluation of a particular situation he has observed, and it can concomitantly indicate to the reader unit delimitation. Qohelet uses it again in v. 10c. Whether it refers back to v. 10 or to v. 11, it indicates a new topic. The use of הַבֵּל in v. 14c involves a judgment but is then connected to the ethic of v. 15 with the ו ("and"); so both vv. 14 and 15 belong together as a unit.

Content-wise, vv. 12b-13 do not conflict with v. 14. First of all, the topics are different, though related. The discussion of vv. 11-13 is about the delay of consequence and the danger of ignoring it. Vv. 14-15 are about the problem of predicting consequence. It provides sagacious advice to enjoy the moment rather than calculate for future rewards. Vv. 11-13 give their advice based on the long-term avoidance of pain. Vv. 14-15 offer their advice based on the short-term enjoyment of pleasure. Apparently, Qohelet is being eclectic with his ethical system, drawing on both short-term and long-term concerns, which creates some tension. This is typical for his cautious, *via media* approach to life's difficulties.

Secondly, the religious categories addressed overlap but there is clear distinction in usage. Both vv. 11-13 and 14-15 share the categories "the wicked" (רָשָׁע), and "sinner" (חַיֵּיטָא) of v. 12 is closely related. However, vv. 14-15 make no mention of God-fearers or the concept of God-fearing.

God-fearing is a significant concept in the Wisdom tradition, and the book of Qohelet is no exception. Its use in 12,13 is from the hand of the epilogist. In 3,14 Qohelet appears to be using it in the more traditional sense as a way to emphasize the appropriate demeanor of a human self-conscious of the great distance between humanity and the deity. However, in 5,6 and 7,18, it has a more idiosyncratic nuance. R. Gordis defines its use in these two places negatively as "avoiding foolish actions and their consequent penalty"⁽¹²⁾. Though Gordis⁽¹³⁾ and others have disagreed, this nuance fits well with our unit. In 8,12b-13, Qohelet is not connecting the ill-fate of the wicked with their behavior simply because they are wicked, but rather

⁽¹¹⁾ BARTON, *Ecclesiastes*, 154.

⁽¹²⁾ GORDIS, *Koheleth*, 94; cf. Zimmer, who defines God-fearing in Qohelet negatively as the fear of punishment (*Zwischen Tod*, 204-205, 211-212),

⁽¹³⁾ GORDIS, *Koheleth*, 94.

specifically because “they do not stand in fear before God.” This means they do not reckon with the possibility of delayed consequence and, thus, assume a life of reckless behavior. Semantically, then, in vv. 11-13, the concepts of wickedness/sinfulness and God-fearing/non-God-fearing are not synonymous but rather contiguous. They are related in that both are ethical categories, but the nuances are distinct. God-fearing, then, according to Qohelet, is a superior alternative to the traditional notions of righteousness and wisdom⁽¹⁴⁾.

If vv. 14-15 make no reference to God-fearing, how can they contradict vv. 11-13? Both the categories and topic of discussion are technically distinct. There is no clash. Why scholars are quick to recognize the distinctiveness of Qohelet’s use of God-fearing in other passages (3,14; 5,6; 7,18) and yet inconsistently assume that in 8,12b-13 God-fearing is equated with the traditional notion of righteousness is baffling.

Nowhere else in the book does Qohelet criticize the dichotomization of God-fearing/non-God-fearing. In 9,2, Qohelet deconstructs all the traditional dichotomizations of his time: the righteous and the wicked, the good and the evil, the clean and unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not, the good and sinner, and those who vow and those who do not. Conspicuously absent is the God-fearing / non-God-fearing dichotomization. This is a significant factor never considered by scholars. It appears that in the book Qohelet does positively offer a particular ethical position: God-fearing, a *via media* that he never evaluates negatively because it represents his own ethical position. As the earlier scholar J. Pedersen stated regarding the significance of 8,12-13 in its context, “What counts is neither being pious nor evil, but fearing God and knowing how ‘to guard oneself against him’”⁽¹⁵⁾.

Viewing vv. 12b-13 as a traditional saying understands ידע אני אשר (“I know that” [v. 12b]) in an unnatural way. Qohelet expresses the first person common singular usage with the root ידע (“to know”) in two ways. Four are with the conjugation of the perfect form (1,17; 2,14; 3,12,14) and one is with the active participle with the independent pronoun אני (“I”). B. Isaksson argues that Qohelet only uses the perfect form when he wants to connote something he believes in, while the sole instance of participial usage (8,12b) is Qohelet’s way of expressing what is traditional or commonly accepted⁽¹⁶⁾. However, with the four perfect usages it is clear that the context is dominated by perfect forms, which are appropriate for Qohelet’s autobiographical narrative (with experiments and observations). The perfect forms of ידע reflect Qohelet’s conclusions to his experiments / observations and are closely connected with a preceding, perfect form, ראיתי (“I saw”). The context of vv. 11-13 is different. It is not an experiment or observation from which Qohelet draws conclusions. Rather, Qohelet is explaining why the wicked of his day are enticed to continue in the folly of sin, with an attached warning. The present, continued action expressed in the participial is appropriate. The participial form is dominant for this unit (eight participles to four

⁽¹⁴⁾ For a fuller treatment of Qohelet’s use of God-fearing as an alternative to traditional categories, see my “(Dis)closure in Qohelet: Qohelet Deconstructed”, *JSOT* 27/1 (2002) 117-121.

⁽¹⁵⁾ PEDERSEN, “Scepticisme israélite”, 360.

⁽¹⁶⁾ B. ISAKSSON, *Studies in the Language of Qoheleth: With Special Emphasis on the Verbal System* (Uppsala 1987) 67.

perfect/imperfect forms). Also, the participial form of יָדַע is quite common in Qohelet (3,21; 6,8.12; 8,1.7.12; 9,1; 11,5-6).

יִהְיֶהטוֹב ("it will be well") is ambiguous enough to not clash with Qohelet's typical criticism of the deed-consequence connection (e.g., 7,15). It is significant to note that nowhere does Qohelet ever deny the connection absolutely⁽¹⁷⁾. In 5,1-6, some type of deed-consequence connection is assumed for Qohelet to warn against foolish, cultic infractions that might lead to divine punishment. God-fearing is here (v. 6) only defined negatively as avoiding the consequences of foolish behavior. "It will be well" then should best be understood negatively: to avoid the dangers of extreme or wicked/foolish behavior (cf. 7,17) and at least not prematurely shorten one's life. It appears significant that Qohelet is careful not to state that God-fearers will necessarily lengthen their days, only that non-God-fearers will not. Of all the ethical positions available for Qohelet's audience, Qohelet essentially argues that God-fearing or a *via media* approach is the safest and best. However, there are no absolute guarantees⁽¹⁸⁾. That God-fearing "is the best policy" seems to be Qohelet's intended message.

W. Brown has an interesting suggestion that "it will be well" in 8,12b-13 might be understood in a qualitative and not quantitative sense: being happy. This would mean there is a eudaimonistic facet to Qohelet's notion of God-fearing: God-fearers are not necessarily the richest or longest-living persons but the happiest (cf. 6,1-3)⁽¹⁹⁾. And, similarly, Krüger argues for a deontological sense: one should be a God-fearer because it is the right thing to do⁽²⁰⁾! However, I still see a consequential and quantitative aspect: at least God-fearers can avoid premature death by escaping avoidable divine wrath! At any rate, to suggest that Qoh 12b-13 represents a traditional saying and not Qohelet's own sentiment is both to ignore Qohelet's idiosyncratic usage of God-fearing and to unduly restrict the semantic possibilities of "it will be well".

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SUMMARY

This note argues that the popular, scholarly opinion that Qoh 8,12b-13 is the citation by the author of a traditional saying that he then counters in v. 14 or relativizes is incorrect. Rather, this unit represents the author's own sentiment and signifies that he does not absolutely reject the deed/consequence connection. This unit counsels against the common misconception by the wicked that delayed consequence means no consequence. Thus, vv. 12b-13 do not conflict with what precedes or follows and do not conflict with the author's typical questioning of the validity of the deed/consequence connection.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Zimmer notes that Qohelet never completely denies the deed-consequence connection; only as a rule is it questioned (*Zwischen Tod*, 193, cf. 3-4); SNEED, "(Dis)closure", 117-121.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Cf. ZIMMER, *Zwischen Tod*, 214.

⁽¹⁹⁾ BROWN, *Ecclesiastes*, 88-89; *id.*, *Character in Crisis*, 145-146; cf. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, who describes God-fearing in 7,15-18 as eudaimonistic ("Via Media", 191-199).

⁽²⁰⁾ KRÜGER, "Kohélet-Buch", 353-354.

The Lord's Bow in Habakkuk 3,9a

Habakkuk 3,9a has been and is considered by many as the most difficult passage in the book. Already Delitzsch wondered whether the second colon of 3,9a should not be considered the most difficult in Habakkuk 3, if not in the entire prophetic corpus, when one takes into account the more than one hundred interpretations that had been proposed for it by his time⁽¹⁾. Since Delitzsch's time scholars continued to struggle with the textual difficulties of the first two colons and the thematic ambiguity of the second colon.

The difficulties encountered with Hab 3,9a are to some extent mitigated if it is understood that the verse consists of two parts, each belonging to a different scene in the general theme of the theophany. The natural point of division in Hab 3,9 is the word סלה, which the Septuagint usually translates as "Pause" (διάψαλμα). סלה אמר may be a later editorial instruction to the person who recites the Psalm to say at this point סלה and thereby indicate an interlude, or distinction from what follows. Consequently, the first colon and the first two words of the second colon have to be merged into a single colon, which belongs to the preceding scene of "crowds" urging God on and encouraging God's march to battle. Because the warrior is God, these "crowds" are virtual, their presence implied by the exhortations⁽²⁾. Verses 7-9a present a poetic rendition of these exhortations and should end with an uplifting סלה, according to the instructions of a later editor. The last colon of this verse picks up the theme of "evening, or leveling, the path before the Lord," which was treated in verse 6.

In this thematic framework, the first two colons in the MT should be read: עריה תעור קשתך (קשתך) שבעות מפות (אמר סלה). While קשת was included for explanatory purposes, it needs not be in the text *per se*, because the preceding קשתך implies it. Thus, no textual emendations of the MT are necessary. The focus of this note is on the enigmatic שבעות מפות, which it is claimed describes the Lord's bow.

Though Hab 3,9a has been subjected to numerous interpretations, there is general agreement that קשתך refers to the Lord's bow. There are numerous verses in the Hebrew Bible that use the term קשת but few of these refer specifically to the Lord's bow. The Lord's bow is only referred to in Gen 9,13. 14. 16; Ezek 39,9; Hab 3,9; Lam 2,4 and 3,12. The use of the term in Lamentations, which appears as referring to the Lord's bow (דרך קשתו), is in fact an expression of psychological 'transfer.' The enemy's act of using the bow is construed as being performed by the Lord because He has permitted it. Thus, in essence, Lam 2,4 and 3,12 do not refer to Lord's bow *per se*. This leaves Gen 9,13-14. 16; Ezek 39,9, and Hab 3,9. Except for Hab 3,9 the references to the Lord's bow are in the context of the rainbow. The rainbow consists of seven colors. Naturally, it would make sense to associate שבעות with the seven components of the rainbow, the Lord's bow. I suggest that the prophet considered the rainbow as seven "self bows", each made of

⁽¹⁾ F. DELITZSCH, *Der Prophet Habakuk* (Leipzig 1843) 165.

⁽²⁾ A. PINKER, "Problems and Solutions of Habakkuk 3:8", *JBQ* 31,1 (2003) 3-8.

one piece of wood (מטה), which formed the Lord's laminated "composite bow⁽³⁾," made of seven (מפוח).

The standard meaning of the feminine noun (plural) שבעות, in the construct state, is "oaths" or "seven". In each of these meanings it occurs in Ezekiel (21,28 and 45,21, respectively). The variant שבעה occurs in Jer 5,24, where it probably refers to the seven weeks between the harvest of wheat and that of barley, though the Septuagint reads there שבעת (πληρωσεως) but in Ezek 45,21 שבעות (ἑπτά).

The original reading of the Septuagint here was apparently ἑπτα (=שבע, rather than σὺς ἐπὶ) "seven". The Vulgate and Targum take it as the word for "oath or covenant"⁽⁴⁾, and Barberini (ἐχόρτασας) and Peshitta (וּמַסְבִּיעִין) read it as from the root שבע. Thus Barberini translates, "You sated the arrows of his quiver". Many followed this understanding using various grammatical forms of the root שבע. Duhm deemed the Barberini version a bold conjecture of the past ("Jene griechische Übersetzung ist eher ein interessante Beispiel einer kühnen Konjektur aus alter Zeit"). He emended שבעות to שפעת ("abundance")⁽⁵⁾.

Followers of the Peshitta and Barberini assumed that the verb שבע can be used in Hebrew for describing the satiety of a weapon, as it 'devours' its victims in battle⁽⁶⁾. However, nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is it alluded that arrows consume anything or are sated, while there are numerous such references to the sword (Jer 46,10). Followers of the Vulgate and Targum, who take שבעות as the Qal passive participle from the root שבע ("to swear"), assume that weapons were 'empowered' by an oath prior to battle⁽⁷⁾. They find support in the fact that the Hebrew Bible mentions magical shafts (Exod 7-8, Num 17, etc. Cf. 2 Kgs 4,29 and 31), which conferred victory in battle (cf. Exod 17,8-13)⁽⁸⁾. Yet, in no case mentioned in the Hebrew Bible were the מפוח empowered by any prior oath or incantation⁽⁹⁾. Indeed, it would seem

⁽³⁾ The ancient Egyptians used several different types of bows. The two most common varieties were the "self bow", made of one piece of wood, and the laminated "composite bow". The composite bow was introduced into Egypt from Western Asia probably around 1700 BCE. It was made of three basic layers of different materials, such as wood, horn and sinew. This combined the best features of each to yield a bow that was stronger and more resilient than the simple bows of just wood. It was superior to the self bow and could hit a target at a distance of some 250 m. The bow had a characteristic double-curve shape which became triangular when strung (the ends were bent back when the bow was being strung). For a description of an Assyrian composite bow see C.N. HICKMAN, "Ancient Composite Bows", *Journal of the Society of Archer-Antiquaries* 2 (1959).

⁽⁴⁾ O. LIVNEH-KAFRI, "Sepher Habakkuk (Prakim 1,3) Beperusho shel Ha-Parshan Ha-Karai Japheth Ben 'Ali Ha-Levi Ha-Bazri", *Sfunoth* 6 (1993) 109. Japheth, too, takes שבעות to mean the oath expressed in Exod 6,6.

⁽⁵⁾ B. DUHM, *Das Buch Habakuk* (Tübingen 1906) 86. The Genizah text supports the reading שפעת. See A.M. HABERMAN, "פרק ג של ספר חבקוק לפי נוסח ה'גניזה'", *Beth Mikra* 26 (1981) 106.

⁽⁶⁾ T. HIEBERT, *God of My Victory*. The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3 (Harvard Semitic Monographs 38; Atlanta 1986) 27. Hiebert's reliance on the occurrence of the verb שבע, in the description of Anat taking her bow (qšt) and arrows (mtm) into battle and becoming sated (šb't, tšb') there (CTA 31'ntf.2.19.29) is misplaced. It is not the weapon that is sated there but the warrior.

⁽⁷⁾ S. MOWINCKEL, "Zum Psalm des Habakuk", *TZ* 9 (1953) 15-16.

⁽⁸⁾ R.D. HAAK, *Habakkuk* (Supplement to Vetus Testamentum XLIV; Leiden 1992) 94-95.

⁽⁹⁾ *Enuma elish* contains the following blessings of Marduk's bow by Anu: Anu raised the Bow and spoke in the assembly of Gods,

ridiculous to Habakkuk that the Lord would have to put a spell on the מַטְוֶה (10) to make them work. While not every interpretation and emendation of מַטְוֶה (10) can be discussed in this short note, it is reasonable to posit that the meaning "seven" for שִׁבְעוֹת, supported by the Septuagint and Ezek 45,21, would be acceptable if the proper context could be found (11). I believe that this context is that of the rainbow and composite bow (12).

The relation between the Lord's bow in Hab 3,9 and the rainbow has not escaped the notice of some commentators. Tanhum mentions an opinion that קֶשֶׁתָּהּ refers to the rainbow (13). Similarly, Ehrlich understands קֶשֶׁתָּהּ here as referring to the rainbow, and as an indication that the upheaval in nature will not result in a flood (14). Bolle, in his explanation of Hab 3,11 notes, "Habakkuk likened the rainbow in heaven on a rainy day to God's battle bow and the lightnings to His arrows and spears" (15). However, no one of these commentators made the link between the Lord's bow and מַטְוֶה.

The masculine noun (plural) מַטְוֶה means "branches, rods, staff, scepters, spears, tribes". The Septuagint translates מַטְוֶה as "scepters" (σκήπτρα), the Targum as "tribes" (שבטים) and so does the Vulgate (*tribubus*), the Peshitta as "ar-

He kissed the Bow. "May She go far!"

He gave to the Bow Her Names, saying, "May Long and Far be the first, and Victorious the second;

Her third Name shall be Bowstar, for She shall shine in the sky".

(10) H.St.J. THACKERAY, "Primitive Lexionary Notes in the Psalm of Habakkuk", *JThS* 12 (1911) 191-213. The second colon of Hab 3,9a was most extensively examined by Thackeray, who has suggested that it is not a line of poetry but an intrusive prosaic gloss containing three separate rubrics which mark the end of a lectionary text. J.H. Eaton ("The Origin and Meaning of Habakkuk 3", *ZAW* 76 [1964] 151) effectively rejected this position on the following grounds:

- a. the line has an appropriate meter;
- b. none of the versions seems to have any knowledge of such a lectionary significance;
- c. there is considerable uncertainty about the early history of the lectionaries;
- d. no parallels could be found outside this psalm that support his conclusions regarding lectionary catchwords;
- e. the theory is too fragile to win acceptance if the words can be reasonably interpreted as an integral part of the text.

(11) J. DAY, "Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalm XXIX and Habakkuk III 9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah VI", *VT* 29 (1979) 143-151. Day called attention to the seven-fold repetition of קֶלֶב in Ps 29 and its close relation to Baal's seven thunders and lightnings in Ugaritic texts. Because Ps 29 and Hab 3 both describe a theophany and use similar language Day suggested that שִׁבְעוֹת מַטְוֶה refers to God's seven arrows of lightning, comparable to the seven thunders in Ps 29 and Baal's seven thunders and lightnings. Note that in Ps 29 it is the thunder that is repeated seven times, while the Ugaritic text regarding Baal says, "Seven lightnings (he had), Eight storehouses of thunder were the shafts of (his) lightnings" (RS 24.245 lines 3b-4).

(12) EATON, "Origin", 152. Eaton notes that "The translation 'Heptads of shafts is the (divine) word' can now be supported by the testimony of the Qumran 'War Scroll' to the importance of seven-fold volleys in Israelite warfare (cf. Y. YADIN, *The Scroll of War* ..., 1961, 1311f., 140)". However, there is no evidence for this practice for the period under discussion. It would be difficult for a warrior to carry that many shafts, and none of the ancient drawings show even the chariots to have that many shafts.

(13) H. SHY, *Tanhum Ha-Yerushalmi's Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (Jerusalem 1991) 230.

(14) A.B. EHRLICH, *Mikra ki-Pschuto* (New York 1969) III, 453.

(15) M. BOLLE, *Sepher Habakkuk*, in "Tere Asar im Perush Daat Mikra" (Mosad Harav Kook; Jerusalem 1970) 26.

rows,” and Barberini as “missiles” (βολιδαξ). The meaning “scepter or staff” for מִצְחָ is supported by the customary usage of the term *mī* in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Hebrew, where the term occurs usually in the singular and must be understood as “a mace or scepter”. מִצְחָ was translated here as “soldier’s spear”⁽¹⁶⁾, “war, campaign, fight”⁽¹⁷⁾, “yoke shafts”⁽¹⁸⁾, “clubs”⁽¹⁹⁾, “arrow”⁽²⁰⁾, etc. The range of meanings that were assigned to מִצְחָ depicts the ambiguity encountered with the second colon of Hab 3,9. For the basic meaning of מִצְחָ and its plural מִצְחָ is clear, and among the many uses of מִצְחָ was being a component of a bow.

It is thus natural to consider שבעות מִצְחָ as referring to the Lord’s bow (קשתך) and mean “seven strips;” i.e., the Lord’s bow is a composite bow made of seven strips or layers of wood as the rainbow consists of seven colored layers. It would have been impossible for a human to bend such a bow and it would have been very powerful if used. שבעות means “seven” as in Ezek 45,21 and as suggested by the Septuagint, and מִצְחָ has the basic meaning “rods,” in particular slats for constructing a composite bow. Associating the Lord’s bow with the holy number “seven” symbolizes a measure of divine vengeance (Gen 4,15 and 24) and perhaps how miraculous it was. The description of the Lord’s bow would be akin to that of Marduk’s bow in *Enuma elish*

The Lord received the Bow, and set His weapon down in front of Them.
The Gods His fathers looked at the net, which He had made,
Looked at the Bow, how miraculous Her construction,
And His fathers praised the deeds that He had done.

In summary, I suggest reading Hab 3,9a עֲרִיָה חֲעֹר קֶשֶׁתְךָ (קשתך) שבעות מִצְחָ with the meaning *Naked bare Your bow, of seven strips! (say Selah)*. This interpretation rests on the association of the Lord’s bow in the Hebrew Bible with the seven components of the rainbow, and the ancient concept of the composite bow. שבעות מִצְחָ then describes the Lord’s bow.

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SUMMARY

This note suggests that the enigmatic שבעות מִצְחָ refers to the Lord’s bow, which in the Hebrew Bible is associated with the rainbow. Habakkuk views symbolically the Lord’s bow as an unusually powerful composite bow of seven rods, as the rainbow consists of seven colors. Hab 3,9a עֲרִיָה חֲעֹר קֶשֶׁתְךָ is understood in the sense *Naked bare Your bow, of seven strips! (say Selah)*, where *say Selah* is a later editorial instruction to the person who recites the Psalm to say the word סלה at this point, and thereby indicate an interlude, or distinction from what follows.

⁽¹⁶⁾ H.W.F. GESENIUS, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scripture* (trans. S. Tregelles) (Grand Rapids 1996) 466-467.

⁽¹⁷⁾ W.F. ALBRIGHT, “The Psalm of Habakkuk”, *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy* (ed. T.H. ROBINSON) (New York 1950) 1-18.

⁽¹⁸⁾ B. MARGULIS, “The Psalm of Habakkuk: A Reconstruction and Interpretation”, *ZAW* 82 (1970) 409-442.

⁽¹⁹⁾ F.I. ANDERSEN, *Habakkuk* (AB 25; Garden City, NY 2001) 320-322. See also his relatively extensive discussion of Hab 3,9.

⁽²⁰⁾ HIEBERT, *God of My Victory*, 27-28.

RECENSIONES

Vetus Testamentum

Regine HUNZIKER-RODEWALD, *Hirt und Herde. Ein Beitrag zum alttestamentlichen Gottesverständnis* (BWANT 155). Stuttgart – Berlin – Köln, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2001. 256 p. 16 × 24. DM 69,05.

Il volume è pubblicazione di una tesi dottorale realizzata sotto la direzione del Prof. Walter Dietrich e presentata alla facoltà teologica evangelica dell'università di Berna nel semestre invernale 2000/2001. Nella prefazione la Hunziker-Rodewald informa che originariamente la ricerca aveva per oggetto il “raduno dei dispersi” ma che è passata alla simbolica pastore-gregge a motivo dello stretto collegamento tra i due temi. In effetti il raduno dei dispersi chiama in causa l'immagine di Dio Pastore del suo popolo e a sua volta questa pone il problema del rapporto della simbolica biblica con l'ideologia regale dell'Antico Oriente che utilizzava una terminologia analoga.

Il volume si articola in tre parti: A. *introduzione*, con esposizione del problema, scopo della ricerca, simbolica pastore-gregge nelle letterature orientali antiche (Egitto, Mesopotamia, Siria-Palestina, Asia Minore), confronto conclusivo con l'AT e tesi fondamentale del lavoro; B. *pastore e gregge nell'AT*, con tre suddivisioni: I. sintesi della storia del motivo pastore-gregge, II. Yhwh Signore del suo gregge, III. Yhwh Pastore del suo gregge; C. *sintesi e prospettive* (“Ausblick”), con tre suddivisioni: I. sviluppi (“Ausgänge”) della tematica nel resto dell'AT, II. dall'AT alla letteratura ebraica post-biblica, III. dall'AT al NT. Il volume si chiude con una breve conclusione (“Fazit”). Seguono la bibliografia e gli indici dei nomi e dei soggetti, dei termini ebraici e delle citazioni. La parte più consistente (150 p.) è quella centrale (B), in cui vengono studiati in dettaglio i passi biblici ritenuti più importanti.

L'introduzione (A) prende le mosse da certa “letteratura edificante” (“Erbauungsliteratur”) che fa leva su alcuni passi biblici che a detta dell'autrice (d'ora in poi A.) stimolano i sensi e la fantasia, quali le storie dei Patriarchi e il Sal 23, mentre sorvola su passi duri che presentano Dio stesso come colui che ha disperso il suo gregge (Ger 23,3) o che è adirato contro di esso (Sal 74,1). L'A. intende esaminare questa diffusa tendenza idilliaca sulla scia di J.D. Huntzinger, che nel 1999 ha presentato una tesi di laurea presso l'università di Pasadena (ancora inedita, sembra: cf. 12,

n. 6) sostenendo che la prospettiva che unifica i vari passi biblici sulla tematica pastore-gregge è la restaurazione dopo l'esilio.

Per una corretta interpretazione della simbolica pastorale non ci si può basare, secondo l'A., su un testo come il Sal 23 che ha un dettato atemporale ("zeitlos"), ma è necessario identificare la situazione storica e i gruppi etnici in cui l'idea pastorale nasce e si sviluppa, studiare il contesto socio economico della pastorizia e della simbolica relativa tenendo conto anche dei modelli orientali antichi. Dal punto di vista semantico e teorico non approfondisce la differenza fra i testi che paragonano Dio a un pastore (cf. Sal 80,2) e quelli che lo identificano con esso (Sal 23,1). D'altra parte afferma che desumerà il *tertium comparationis*, o segno semantico comune, dal contesto di ogni singolo passo.

La scelta dei testi da trattare per esteso nella parte centrale, è operata in base a un criterio abbastanza rigido: che sia presente almeno un termine esplicito della simbolica pastorale, come "radunare" o "condurre", detto di Dio nel confronti del suo popolo (14-15). In base a questo criterio vengono esclusi testi come Gn 48,15-16 e Sal 28,9, in cui pure Dio viene, rispettivamente, designato dal patriarca Giacobbe come *hā'ēlōhīm hārō'eh 'ōtī* "il Dio che è stato mio pastore" e pregato in favore di Israele suo popolo con *ûr'ēm* "e pascili!". Viene escluso anche Is 49,8-12 perché, dice l'A., soggetto di *yir'û* "pascoleranno" (v. 9) sono i prigionieri liberati, non Dio, per quanto nel versetto successivo compaiano due verbi di "guidare" con soggetto Dio.

Notiamo che l'A. praticamente enuncia la sua tesi di fondo e le conclusioni prima di iniziare la ricerca vera e propria. È questo un procedimento costante nel corso del volume. La parte introduttiva contiene non solo i principi dell'analisi successiva ma anche l'elenco dei testi interessati direttamente e indirettamente, in sintesi la loro datazione, la loro teologia e anche un abbozzo della teologia generale di base e quindi della visione di Dio che la simbolica pastorale veicola. La designazione di Pastore implica un Dio che è vicino al suo popolo, non un Re lontano: "Als Hirt ist Jhwh gerade nicht als der hehr auf Zion Thronende, sondern als der von den Keruben Herabsteigende und mitten unter seine Herde Tretende vorgestellt" (38). Segue l'esposizione delle concezioni orientali antiche che confermano la tesi.

Lo stesso procedimento si ritrova all'inizio dell'analisi dei testi biblici (B. II-III). Prima vengono enunciati i principi e sintetizzate le conclusioni, poi si dichiara: "Die hier nur grob skizzierte Entwicklung und Ausprägung der Vorstellung von Jhwh als dem Herrn und Eigentümer und später Hirten seiner Herde soll im Folgenden nun detailliert nachgezeichnet werden" (72).

Uno dei punti fissi della ricerca è la distinzione tra proprietario del gregge e pastore, distinzione di per sé legittima (la fa anche Gesù in Gv 10, tra il pastore, proprietario del gregge, e il mercenario) ma che nei confronti di Dio, e per di più intesa in modo rigido, può portare a fraintendimenti, dato che è evidente che Dio è e rimane il proprietario del gregge Israele anche quando lo affida a pastori umani. L'A. non nega questo ma ritiene che la simbolica pastorale venga effettivamente applicata a Dio solo quando i pastori umani (re e altri capi del popolo) si rivelano infedeli

al loro compito e, di conseguenza, Egli colpisce sia i pastori che il gregge, uccide e disperde. La simbolica pastorale viene applicata a Dio durante e dopo l'esilio babilonese, allo scopo di elaborare una "teologia di crisi". In quanto proprietario del gregge, Dio ha un dovere preciso verso di esso: è tenuto a intervenire. E infatti "si pente" del castigo inferto e interviene, prima per punire i nemici, poi facendosi Lui stesso pastore: impugna il bastone, raduna il suo gregge, lo riporta al pascolo nella sua terra e lo cura personalmente.

Una visione teologica come questa, formulata in modo evolutivo e fortemente legata a una precisa situazione di crisi, si basa su un presupposto e su una scelta mirata di testi biblici. Il presupposto consiste nel fatto di identificare automaticamente la dispersione del gregge Israele e il suo raduno con l'esilio babilonese e il ritorno da esso. Ora però è noto che, prima di questo esilio, si verificò una deportazione della gente del Regno del Nord a seguito della caduta di Samaria (722 a.C.), e anche una deportazione massiccia degli abitanti della Shefela di Giuda in occasione dell'assedio di Gerusalemme a opera di Sennacherib (701 a.C.), deportazione attestata nei documenti assiri più che nella Bibbia. È perciò quanto meno prudente evitare l'identificazione automatica con il posteriore esilio babilonese, verificando le varie possibilità caso per caso, con possibili conseguenze importanti per la datazione dei testi e quindi per lo sviluppo della teologia biblica relativa. Su questo argomento mi permetto di rinviare alla sintesi di A. Niccacci, *Un profeta tra oppressori e oppressi. Analisi esegetica del capitolo 2 di Michea nel piano generale del libro* (SBFAn 27; Jerusalem 1989) 136-141. In questo volume si troverà anche un'interpretazione molto diversa da quella dell'A. dei testi micheani che contengono la terminologia pastorale (Mic 2,12-13; 5,1-5; 7,14-20).

Ho già accennato al fatto che l'A. opera una scelta di testi: ne privilegia alcuni e li studia in dettaglio, altri li lascia nell'ombra affermando che in essi la simbolica pastorale è solo marginale. È ovvio che in ogni scelta sussiste almeno il pericolo di arbitrarietà. Ora mi sembra che questo pericolo si realizzi nella decisione di non tener conto, nel tracciare questa sorta di teologia storica, di passi come Gn 48,15 e 49,24, che legano la simbolica pastorale alle tradizioni dei Patriarchi, e come Sal 68,8; 77,15-21; 78,52-55; 79,13; 80,2 che la legano all'esodo e all'ingresso nella terra promessa. E' difficile comprendere per quale motivo la simbolica sia da ritenere centrale nei testi che trattano dell'esilio babilonese e del ritorno, mentre non lo sia per testi che chiamano in causa Dio come creatore e padre dei Patriarchi o come liberatore del popolo dalla schiavitù dell'Egitto.

È piuttosto strano che l'A., che mi concede l'onore della prima nota (11) come esponente della "letteratura edificante" contro cui è diretta la sua ricerca, citi una mia opera divulgativa, *Yahweh Shepherd of the People* (Slough - Maynooth 1993), mentre non faccia parola della mia tesi di laurea (perché in italiano?), *Il pastore. Cristo e la Chiesa nella prima lettera di Pietro* (RivBSup 21; Bologna 1990), dove ho trattato la simbolica pastorale con maggiore approfondimento e in cui ho cercato di valorizzare tutti i testi biblici, senza alcuna scelta preconcetta, sulla base di quattro

campi semantici (piuttosto che sulla base di una problematica datazione dei testi): conduzione, provvidenza, liberazione, alleanza (cf. cap. VI).

Mi pare che la Hunziker-Rodewald esaspera il fatto che i testi dell'AT sono per lo più critici verso i pastori umani al punto che lascia da parte come marginale e temporanea la promessa di pastori secondo il cuore di Dio e in particolare di un pastore speciale, novello David: si veda, ad es., la difficoltà che incontra nello spiegare la promessa di "un solo Pastore... il mio Servo David" in Ez 34,23 (65-69). La conseguenza più grave di questa marginalizzazione si avverte nella breve discussione dei testi del NT (C. III), dove si accenna all'applicazione della simbolica pastorale a Gesù e poi agli Apostoli. Considerata dal punto di vista dell'AT, dice, questa applicazione è "problematica": "Mit der vorgestellten *Delegierung* der Hirtenschaft an Jesus, der diese seinerseits an Petrus weitergibt (Joh 21,15-17), werden der Etablierung menschlich verwalteter Pastoralmacht auf der Basis des Sukzessionsprinzips Tor und Tür geöffnet (Apg 20,28; Eph 4,11; 1Petr 5,2, vgl. 1Clem 44,3), eine – vom Alten Testament her betrachtet – problematische Entwicklung" (225). Direi che problematica davvero è la sua affermazione e più in generale la sua interpretazione dell'AT. E non solo perché parla di una "delega" dell'ufficio pastorale anche nei confronti di Gesù, ma perché ritiene "problematica" la delega in sé ad intermediari umani. Credo al contrario che l'AT presenti senza contraddizione, da un lato l'intervento diretto di Dio, dall'altro la promessa di pastori all'altezza della situazione. L'intervento diretto è un modo per indicare che la liberazione del nuovo esodo, a differenza di quanto avvenne nel primo, è totalmente opera di Dio, non presuppone alcuna mediazione umana. Ma una volta realizzata, la liberazione richiede una classe dirigente rinnovata, all'altezza del compito (Ger 3,15; 23,5-6) e un novello David (Ez 34,23-24; 37,24).

L'A. insiste che base della teologia pastorale è il "pentimento" di Dio per il male da lui stesso arrecato al suo popolo: "poiché mi sono pentito (*nihamti*) del male che ho fatto a voi" (Ger 42,10). Non risulta però che questo sentimento di Dio sia legato in modo speciale al ritorno dall'esilio (anzi in Ger 42,10 condizione del pentimento è restare nella terra e non fuggire in Egitto!); non risulta neppure che sia esclusivo verso Israele, dato che si legge a proposito dei Niniviti in Gio 3,10: "Allora Dio si pentì (*wayyinnāhem*) del male che aveva detto di fare loro e non lo fece". Voglio dire che il pentimento di Dio è certo uno dei sentimenti che costituiscono la pastoraltà di Dio, ma non l'unico né forse il primo. Il campo semantico della simbolica pastorale non si esaurisce nella situazione del ritorno dall'esilio né nei sentimenti che l'hanno reso possibile. È molto più vasto e riguarda l'insieme della storia della salvezza, che non inizia con il ritorno dall'esilio babilonese, ma include l'esodo e, più indietro, le tradizioni dei Patriarchi, almeno di Giacobbe che confessa di aver sperimentato nella sua persona la cura di Dio pastore, e forse include anche la creazione, che è motivo marginale rispetto alla storia della salvezza ma comunque compare in alcuni Salmi, ad esempio nel 121 e soprattutto nel 23.

Riguardo a quest'ultimo testo si nota un curioso cambio di prospettiva: l'A., che nel corso della ricerca storicizza le promesse divine del ra-

duno e del ritorno, del Sal 23 fa una lettura addirittura escatologica. In effetti, studiando Ger 23,1-4 interpreta la radiosa promessa di Dio nei vv. 3-4 ("Io stesso radunerò il resto del mio gregge da tutte le terre in cui le ho cacciate e le farò tornare al loro pascolo, si moltiplicheranno e diventeranno numerosi. Susciterò su di essi pastori che li pasceranno e così non dovranno più temere, non saranno atterriti né castigati, oracolo di Yhwh") in riferimento al "gruppo di Mizpa", cioè a quei Giudei che secondo Ger 40,11-12 ritornarono dai paesi circostanti nei quali si erano dispersi e si radunarono appunto a Mizpa quando seppero che Nabucodonosor aveva messo Godolia a capo della gente rimasta nel paese di Giuda. Godolia però fu presto assassinato e tutto finì. Ora Ger 23,1-4, proprio interpretato alla luce degli avvenimenti del cap. 40, diventa nel corso della ricerca la pietra di paragone con cui vengono confrontati e datati gli altri testi. Se da una parte è apprezzabile il tentativo di collocare le promesse divine in un contesto storico socio culturale, dall'altro si profila però il rischio di ridurle a profezie ex eventu, legate a un episodio contemporaneo e di far loro perdere ogni valenza per il futuro. Anche se una profezia nacque in una situazione storica identificabile, resta il fatto che in quanto Parola di Dio conserva la sua validità ben oltre la contingenza storica.

Mentre dunque per tutta la ricerca l'A. storicizza le promesse, per il Sal 23 cambia radicalmente prospettiva. Afferma che in esso Yhwh viene sentito come pastore personale, non del popolo, e che l'unico parallelo è Gn 48,15-16 (Giacobbe). Premesso che bisognerebbe tenere conto del fatto che il Giacobbe che racconta la sua esperienza personale con Dio è un Patriarca, la cui vita è paradigma del popolo, e che l'orante nel Sal 23 non agisce solo a nome proprio ma come portavoce della comunità radunata in preghiera nel Tempio, ciò che più meraviglia è che l'A. interpreti la "valle oscura" (Sal 23,4) come indicazione della morte fisica e il successivo banchetto nella "casa di Yhwh" (Sal 23,5-6) come il pasto che Dio prepara al defunto nella sua casa dell'eternità (per cui, direbbe il Salmo, non c'è bisogno di portare cibo ai morti come fanno i popoli circostanti!). Ora però questa escatologizzazione del Sal 23 è non solo in contrasto con la tendenza interpretativa dell'A., ma non è affatto necessaria, per non dire che è fuori luogo, dato che il testo è interpretabile nel quadro della vicenda tormentata di David sulla linea di altri analoghi "Salmi di David" (cf. Sal 3; 4; 27; 63). Arriva perciò inattesa la conclusione del volume, in cui l'A. si concede l'unico "volo" di pensiero in un'esposizione altrimenti minuziosa e rigorosa, un volo che si comprenderebbe meglio nella idilliaca "letteratura edificante" che lei contesta: "Der Kulminationspunkt aller in den göttlichen Hirten gesetzten Erwartungen ist in Psalm 23 erreicht, wo der Beter seinen Hirten nicht primär als Führer, sondern als seinen *Begleiter* (V.4a...) preist. Gleichzeitig ist hier – an der Todesgrenze – nun auch die Hirt-Herde-Metaphorik an *ihre* Grenze gelangt, nicht aber ohne einem neuen Bild (V.5) und darin neuer Sehnsucht Raum zu geben" (229).

La presente ricerca attesta comunque un interesse rinnovato per la simbolica pastorale dell'AT nel quadro dell'Antico Oriente. È un robusto tentativo di precisare la terminologia e il senso di vari passi biblici e di trac-

ciare una teologia legata alla storia e alla situazione sociale dell'antico Israele. Una teologia che peraltro è in grado di nutrire la speranza delle generazioni lungo tutta la storia umana.

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Joseph BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 40-55. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19A). New York, Doubleday, 2002. xvii-411 p. 16 × 24. \$45.00 - Can\$ 68.00

Blenkinsopp's second commentary volume on Isaiah follows the felicitous tracks set out in the volume on chs. 1-39 (reviewed in *Biblica* 83 [2002] 273-277). While the first one offers a large introduction (about 60 pages) to the book of Isaiah as a whole and rather short introductions to the main divisions of First Isaiah (chs. 1-2, 13-27, 28-35, 36-39), this one starts with a sort of monograph on chs. 40-55 (almost 90 pages). These are seen as a coherent unity, although chs. 40-48 and chs. 49-55 are accepted to constitute originally independent text complexes.

The introduction makes the reader familiar not only with all the literary and historical problems which critical exegesis has produced since it split up the book of Isaiah into two, later into three fairly independent prophetic entities but also with the larger historical and theological background of the Isaianic chapters concerned. Several subjects which the previous volume has discussed in special sections return in this one, specifically applied now to Second Isaiah: Isa 40-55 as part of the book; as part of the biblical canon; their literary character; their formation; the history of their interpretation; their historical context; aspects of their theology; the text itself and the ancient versions. This gradual dosage of learning, from the first to the second volume, betrays the competent experienced teacher. It is indeed a pleasure to be guided through this part of the book of Isaiah by someone who gives a superb survey of all the issues at stake and to find the information converted into a practical reading guide, clothed moreover in an elegant humanistic setting. Both people with general interest and insight in prophetic literature and experts bowed down with the worries of a huge pile of technical studies of divergent opinions will appreciate the way the author ushers them into this important part of biblical literature.

Blenkinsopp's position with regard to the main questions concerning Second Isaiah is in many ways a surprise since he takes a critical stand *vis-à-vis* the new understanding of the book of Isaiah as the product of a thorough redaction which would have tuned the three main parts and all the underlying collections of oracles into each other. More specifically, he does not consider the variegated connections between chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-55, which are highly assessed by modern research, as being of the sort that an uninterrupted prophetic succession covering more than two centuries could be considered to form the cradle of Second Isaiah (43). Likewise he is unfavourably disposed towards the bunch of 'chapter bridges' which modern research has posited

between First and Second Isaiah (ch[s]. 33, [34–]35, 36–39), and towards the theory that at least chs. 49–55 form the product of a process of ‘Fortschreibung’ of an earlier corpus which consisted of chs. 1–33(35) and chs. 40–48, as well as towards the hypothesis that Second Isaiah would have rewritten the collection of prophecies contained in First Isaiah (48–51). Blenkinsopp’s critical attitude with regard to these issues will not only help modern research to revalue its insights, but it also yields new alternatives of explaining the intriguing historical relation between the two main parts of this prophetic book. Such an alternative is the elaborate suggestion that chs. 34–35 were not added in order to link chs. 40–55 to chs. 1–33 but that they provided the already existing combined corpus of these two sets of chapters with a summarizing interpretation in view of the eschatological dualism of chs. 56–66 (42–46).

Another new way of looking at the the prominent gap in the book of Isaiah is the insistence on points of contact, stylistic and thematic, between chs. 40–55 and the Deuteronomistic Writings (‘*ebed* as a term for the prophet; ‘I am YHWH’ formulas; other divine titles; rejection of foreign gods; appeal to tradition; the topic of ‘to return’). These affinities, together with the borrowing of chs. 36–39 from the Deuteronomistic History (Blenkinsopp rejects a borrowing the other way round), would point to an all-encompassing move, to be situated in Deuteronomistic circles. They added, in his view, chs. 40–55, a literary work of independent, unknown origin, by means of chs. 36–39, to chs. 1–33, in order to create a new interpretive paradigm of Isaiah ben Amoz ‘as a man of God, who interceded, worked miracles and was supportive of the ruler’ (50–54) and to recontextualize the prophet’s radical critique of his society and his announcement of judgement as an ever present reality in the postexilic situation (57).

With regard to the structure of Isa 40–55, Blenkinsopp takes a rather pragmatic stand. At the diachronic level he considers differences of theme and mood or changing addresses to Jacob and Zion not momentous enough to ascribe chs. 40–48 and 49–55 (or parts of it) to different authors. While he is willing to recognise, at some stage of redaction, an alternation of apostrophes to Jerusalem with passages dealing with the Servant, he envisages a later literary operation responsible for the present arrangement of the chapters. These, however, oppose every attempt at dividing them in such a way that all possible criteria get their due. As a consequence, ‘the layout in the commentary is dictated by expedience’, i.e. reasonable length, prophetic formulas, incipits and excipits, changes of address etc. (61).

In explaining the most arduous problem of Isa 40–55, the four ‘Servant Poems’ and the identity of the Servant, Blenkinsopp basically proceeds along diachronic lines (cf. 78–81 and the comment on the passages concerned). Convinced of the fact that these pericopes result from a cumulative editorial process, he allows for a shifting assignment of the title ‘*ebed* to several individuals and groups in the course of time. He assumes that the first poem (42,1–9), due to its affinities with 41,1–6.25–29, presents the Persian king Cyrus as the one commissioned with the task of carrying out God’s business in the world but that the Servant speaking in the second poem (49,1–9) is the same as the overall prophetic speaker of chs. 40–55, whom so far we have rarely heard speaking about himself (40,6; 48,16b). This figure, who by

default takes over the task assigned to Cyrus, predicates himself in the second and third poem as Israel's prophetic voice in the world, thereby fully reinterpreting God's original mission to the foreign king (49,1-6; 50,4-9). More specifically, these very poems testify to the fact that this passing on of Cyrus' mission to the prophet almost coincides with the latter's losing credibility with his people, except for a number of followers, and leads to fierce opposition to, and even physical abuse of, the prophet. It is the messenger's associates in the transmission of the core of his legacy (Isa 40-55), probably the same as those who take the floor in chs. 56-66, who have made this identification explicit in the comment on the third poem (50,10-11) and, in the same way, have composed, after the prophet's death, a sort of funerary oration (52,13-53,12). Living in obedience to the voice of their master, they present themselves in chs. 56-66 as 'the Servants of YHWH' and explain their harsh destiny in the midst of their people as a trial that waits for rectification and recompense from God.

From this survey, two things become clear. First of all, for Blenkinsopp the literary-critical history of Second Isaiah is closely linked to the redactional history of the Servant poems. In his view, chs. 40-48 show few signs of editorialising (the idol passages) but the insertion into chs. 49-55 of the three other Servant poems which then came to alternate with the Zion passages compelled the editors to compose accompanying comments for the immediate context, mainly in chs. 49-51. The scribal milieu that accomplished this overwriting is the same that is heard in chs. 56-66. They added, in addition, 55,6-11 in order to prepare for their own prophetic corpus, the third part of the book of Isaiah. They speak in the name of a minority in the Judaeen temple community, the 'Servants of YHWH' (especially in chs. 65-66), who viewed themselves as the true followers of the original prophet, the so-called 'Second Isaiah', and seem to have been persecuted because of their apocalyptic belief in an imminent intervention from above as their prophetic leader had foretold.

Secondly, this overarching literary-historical hypothesis is fully based on the assumption that Cyrus is the Servant introduced and addressed in 42,1-9. This assumption, in its turn, relies on the allusions to Cyrus in the preceding ch. 41, on the full mention of his name and the overt description of his career in the crown text 45,1-6 (with some dispersed texts), and on the language of the commissioning of a ruler with a programme of justice in the oracle itself. It is only a matter of course that subsequently the following question (which is not new at all) arises: if the very gist of the first Servant poem is prepared for in ch. 41, as Blenkinsopp seems willing to admit, how then is the Cyrus identification to be reconciled with the fact that in 41,8-9 YHWH himself addresses 'Israel / Jacob' as 'my Servant'? Readers of the commentary might even feel compelled to raise this question since the author surprisingly states in his comments on 42,1-9 that 'much of what is said in these verses could also be said of Israel either projecting an ideal Israel or an Israel in the guise of one of the great figures from the past, one "who is what Israel is to become"' (211; the quote is from J.L. McKenzie). It is obvious that if we follow this lead, both the identification of the Servant in 42,1-9 and his reinterpretation in 49,1-9 assume a fully different air.

The present reviewer is greatly interested in how Prof. Blenkinsopp

himself would arrange his overall explanation of Isa 40–55 if he were to proceed along this second trajectory. It is not a matter of a different answer to the question ‘Who is who?’, but it comes down, in fact, to consequently splitting up the diachronic and synchronic procedure to the very end. If a comprehensive interpretation of all the available intratextual data (and non-data: Cyrus is never called ‘Servant’!) concerning the term ‘Servant’ appears to be feasible, I would rather give it precedence over an interpretation which appeals, for a great part, to extratextual information such as the official style of the Persian empire (e.g. the Behistun inscription). To put it simply, while Blenkinsopp allows for the possibility of an innerbiblical *relecture* of 42,1–9 in which the Servant is understood as referring to Israel, I would lend weight to the multicoloured and indeed puzzling image of the Servant as it arises in the second half of the book of Isaiah as a whole, and allow for a precanonical remembrance of Cyrus in the same passage. It should be clear, however, that I would choose Prof. Blenkinsopp with his broad and sensitive experience of biblical texts as a guide on my own way.

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Martin Alonso CORRAL, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Tyre. Historical Reality and Motivations* (BeO 46). Roma, Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2002. xii-249. 16,5 × 24. 16,00€ – \$16.00

This volume, a doctoral dissertation completed at New York University in 2000 under the supervision of Baruch Levine, surveys the historical and cultural background of Ezek 26,1–28,19. The author's thesis argues that the reason for the oracle was as a response to Tyre's maneuvers to cut off Judah from trade. The work begins with an introduction in which Corral reviews the major areas of research done on both Ezekiel 26–28 and the history of Tyre. Certainly the latter must include the work of H.J. Katzenstein (*The History of Tyre. From the Beginning of the Second Millennium B.C.E. until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.E.* [Beer Sheva 1973, reprinted in 1997 with bibliography added]). However, as Corral notes, significant discoveries in both archaeological and textual areas have appeared in the past three decades. Further, he argues that a full synthesis of the historical and archaeological data has not been applied to the study of these chapters from Ezekiel. His proposal to do that in this work takes into account the data as well as a variety of discussions of its interpretation. Following a bibliographical review of materials, the study examines three major areas: the historical issues of the period of the late seventh and early sixth century, particularly Babylonian relations with Jerusalem and Tyre; the cultural issues of major items of trade at this time and the trade routes; and the key exegetical issues of Ezekiel 26–28 relating to Corral's interpretation.

The historical section progresses sequentially from the death of

Ashurbanipal in 627 BCE until the end of the siege of Tyre, which Corral places at 573 BCE. Corral treats issues of the Scythian presence in the Middle East at the end of the seventh century; the reason for the death of Josiah at Megiddo (there is a maddening consistency in misspelling this site as "Meggido") in 609 BCE; the identification of the Magdolos of Herodotus, where Necho fought; the extent of the Babylonian victories and destructions of Jerusalem and Judah in 597 BCE and 586 BCE; the reason for Zedekiah's final rebellion; the identification of the foreign enemy that Nebuchadnezzar defeated according to the Wadi Brisa inscription; Nebuchadnezzar's possible invasion of Egypt (570 BCE?); and the date of the 13-year siege of Tyre reported by Josephus (588/7-573 BCE?). Corral presents a competent survey of the archaeological and textual evidence, including that which is most recent, and the major theories proposed. However, he rarely affirms a particular position. Thus he lists four theories regarding the death of Josiah (27-28), but concludes that it "remains a mystery". One position where he does draw a conclusion is that of the later date for the siege of Tyre. However, the only real alternative is a theory proposed by Wiseman that could not take into account some of the more recent cuneiform evidence. More interesting would be the question of the reliability of Josephus where he reports the story of this siege. There is an absence of evident reflection on the historiography of any of the texts, especially those of Herodotus and Josephus, which are particularly important for the reconstructions of Tyrian history proposed here. The citation of these historians forms an essential component of the discussion, but so does the question of their reliability. The same is true, though to a lesser extent, of Corral's use of the Bible and the ancient Near Eastern material.

It is important to qualify these observations with the note that the next section, dealing with the economic and political factors behind Ezekiel 26-28, does not hesitate to generalize about the biases that the Biblical, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Greek historians had toward the Phoenicians (66-67). Corral's cautions are well warranted, but the reader would benefit in understanding how this works in regard to specific historical and cultural points. Corral argues that the eighth century saw a metal standard emerge in the trading system, most often in terms of silver (although gold could also be used). Certainly international trade took place in earlier periods in a manner that used precious metals and its weight. Thus both the 13th century BCE administrative texts from Ugarit and the international correspondence from 14th century BCE Tell el-Amarna (especially between Babylon and Egypt) express these interests. Corral understands the motivations of this standard and the profits of trade to be the underlying stimuli for Phoenician (Tyrian) expansion in trade and in trading colonies in the eighth and seventh centuries. Colonies in Spain and elsewhere directed silver, gold, tin, and iron from these peripheries to Tyre and its trading interests. Worked ivory became a premier luxury item for trade at this time and the Phoenicians held a monopoly on the famous purple dyed wool. Trade took place with Egypt, Babylon, and the regions of Cilicia. Corral argues that the intense trade and control of the Philistine and Palestinian coastal cities by the Phoenicians led to a trade covenant between them that effectively cut off Jerusalem from any trade benefits. Edom's control of the Arabian trade and its hostility

toward Judah meant that the latter would be impoverished. The most strategic commodities of iron and horses were unavailable to the Judeans in the seventh century. Corral identifies the close connection between the temple of Melqart, the chief Tyrian deity, and the trading practices that took place.

The final discussion in the book deals with a summary of the text of Ezekiel 26–28. In particular, Ezek 26,2 becomes a linchpin in Corral's argument as he contends that it refers to the destruction of the Philistines rather than Jerusalem. This would then allow Tyre to gain the trade that the Philistines controlled. As a result Tyre prospers and does not need Jerusalem, who is then removed from the benefits of international commerce. While the translation is possible, the verse contains difficulties that render any analysis uncertain. Further, there is nothing in the verse that explicitly connects it with the Mediterranean ports (particularly the Philistines). The strongest argument for this interpretation comes from the context. The three verses at the end of Ezekiel 25, immediately preceding this oracle, indict the Philistines. This context suggests that the initial references in the following oracle might indeed refer to the same people. Such an argument would provide a stronger case for a reference to Mediterranean ports in Ezek 26,2. Why then does Corral not refer to it? In his otherwise illuminating discussion of the trade practices as suggested by chapters 26–28 (especially chapter 27), his exegesis does not consider the literary and thus contextual aspects of the text. Although this might not seem important in a primarily historical study, its absence in this case omits what may be the most convincing argument for Corral's thesis.

The book concludes with 58 pages of bibliography followed by indexes of Bible citations and authors. As a whole the work is an excellent starting point for the study of the historical and cultural contexts of Ezekiel 26–28. New evidence and issues are surveyed and provide a useful review to this complex, international period. Within this context, Corral's thesis is reasonably presented. If this is not the final synthesis of biblical and background materials, it does provide a useful introduction and survey of the landscape.

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John BARTON, *Joel and Obadiah*. A Commentary (Old Testament Library). Louisville – London – Leiden, Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. xxi-168 p. 15 × 23. €25.00.

Although the books of Joel and Obadiah tend to occupy positions of benign neglect throughout much of the history of modern critical scholarship, a spate of commentaries for each has begun to flood the market during the

past decade. Recent commentaries on Joel include works by Keller, Crenshaw, Achtemeier, Birch, Coggins, and the reviewer. Recent commentaries on Obadiah include works by Cogan, Keller, Ben Zvi, W. Brown, Pagán, Raabe, Struppe, and again the reviewer. Such numbers suggest that the neglect of the past remains no more.

John Barton's contribution to the Old Testament Library, *Joel and Obadiah*, is the most recent commentary to appear (to date). Given the numbers of volumes to appear during the last decade together with the tremendous methodological ferment that is now affecting the field, it is somewhat surprising that it is such a standard treatment of each book. Barton's classic literary-historical treatment posits an original composition in each case, supplemented respectively by a Deutero-Joel and a Deutero-Obadiah. Whether these models can be sustained in the face of increasing attention to the synchronic literary dimensions of biblical literature is questionable. This is not to say that biblical scholarship must abandon diachronic literary scholarship — indeed, this reviewer wholeheartedly affirms and participates in such work as a necessary aspect of biblical interpretation — but recent discussion demonstrates that literary-historical work has much to learn from synchronic study. One cannot ignore the fact that literature is produced in specific socio-historical contexts to meet the needs of the situation — no matter how difficult reconstruction of that context might be. Literature does take on a life of its own, with meaning that is constructed in part by the reader, but someone at some time made the decision to write the composition in the first place, and that setting inevitably influences the form and contents of the composition at hand. And yet it is only through the present synchronic form of the text that diachronic conclusions may be drawn. Analysis of the synchronic literary form of biblical literature constitutes the necessary precondition for diachronic analysis. But in reading such literature, the contemporary literary discussion teaches us that we must attend to understanding ourselves as much as to the literature.

Barton's treatment of both Joel and Obadiah well illustrates the point. He announces in the preface to the volume his conviction that "commentaries should seek the original location of the book so far as possible and then record honest uncertainty" (x). He further cautions that "(h)olistic readings need to justify themselves by pointing to elements of unity and cohesion within the text itself, rather than by imposing unity *a priori* on literary or religious grounds" (x). He is correct in both of these assertions, and he is not to be regarded as a holdover twentieth century literary-historical ideologue, insofar as his insightful discussion of the literary-historical problem of "the disappearing redactor" has done much to enable modern scholarship to avoid the excesses of the unchecked source criticism of the past (see his *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* [Louisville 1996] 56-58). But one must ask to what extent Barton has correctly understood his own presuppositions and worldview in his reading of these books. As one might expect, he succeeds in some respects, and fails in others.

Barton's analysis of Joel is quite open with respect to his recognition of his own limitations in reading such an historically undefined piece of literature. Joel is notorious for its lack of specific historical information. Joel ben Pethuel is never identified elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, and the text of

the book provides virtually no clues to its historical origins other than its extensive citations of other "biblical" works. Of course even these are debated as scholars are uncertain whether Joel quotes from the forms of Exodus; Amos; Isaiah/Micah; Obadiah; and Chronicles that we now find in our own Bibles or from some form of oral or literary tradition that preceded these books. He relies on the classic criterion of literary coherence to make his case that the present form of Joel contains two independent collections in Joel 1,1-2,27 and 2,28-3,21 (Hebrew, 3,1-4,21) that must be discussed and dated independently. One may quibble about various insertions into the text, but the argument comes down to the fundamental generic distinction, first argued by scholars such as Vernes and Duham, between the two halves of the book. Joel 1,1-2,27 is a well-ordered and unified liturgical work that deals with "the devastating effects of some physical disaster, which included at least locust plague and drought and may have also involved military invasion" (13). Although there are references to the "Day of YHWH" in this portion of the book, it is not an eschatological work insofar as it is concerned with a very real present rather than a putative end of time. Joel 3,1-4,21 (NRSV 2,28-3,21) is a jumbled mass of separate pericopes, "*disiecta membra* of prophetic eschatology" that is composed to portray the fulfillment of Joel 1,1-2,27 "not in the mundane realities of invasion by locusts or human armies but in the remote future of Jewish eschatological expectation" (9). Various linguistic features and the many inner-biblical citations point to the middle of the Persian period somewhere in the 400's B.C.E. as the most likely date for the book in its present form, and the material in Joel 1,1-2,27 would be somewhat earlier although still post-exilic. The first part is the work of the prophet Joel, but the second part is not the work of a prophet; instead it is the work of a learned scribe.

Fundamental to Barton's distinction is the eschatological identification of the second part of the book. A key passage is the depiction of the coming "Day of YHWH" in Joel 3,1-5 (NRSV 2,28-32), which looks forward to a future time when YHWH's "spirit" is poured out on all flesh, when people will have prophetic visions, when YHWH will show "portents" on earth, such as the sun turning dark or the moon turning to blood, and those who call upon the name of YHWH will escape judgment. Several considerations must be born in mind. Many argue that references to future days, i.e., "and it will come to pass in the later days", "it will come to pass in that day", "at that day/time", etc., are eschatological formulas that point to the end of time, but treatment of individual formulas, particularly the famed, *wēhāyā bē'ahārīt hayyāmīm*, "and it will come to pass in later days", demonstrates that they are nothing more than references to the future devoid of eschatological content. Indeed, such content was read into the text on the basis of the Greek rendition of the phrase, *kai estai ep'eschatōn tōn hēmerōn* (Mic 4,1), which does imply eschatological concerns with its use of the term *eschatōn*, "end", to render Hebrew *'ahārīt*, "late, later". The image of people prophesying is hardly eschatological insofar as biblical tradition is well known for its portrayal of the prophesying elders in Numbers 11 and the prophesying Saul in 1 Sam 10,9-16 and 19,18-24. Barton, of course, knows this, and does not see these factors as decisive in his decision. He does note the transformation of nature, in that the sun is darkened and the moon turns to blood, but sees no renewed

fruitfulness in the land such as that found in Isa 32,15. These materials are then additions to an already completed work.

But Barton misses some important points. First, is his understanding that YHWH's "spirit" is poured out on all flesh to produce the prophecy and cosmic transformation noted above. Because this "spirit" is poured out on all flesh, it must be universal, and yet the oracle specifically employs second person plural address language, i.e., "your sons", "your daughters", "your elders", "your young men", etc., will experience this act. The previous passages likewise employ second person language addressed to "the children of Zion" (2,23), by "YHWH, your God", who will give "to you" rain, etc., so that "you will know that I am in the midst of Israel" (2,27). There is no indication in 3,1-5 (NRSV 2,28-32) that the addressees have changed. Furthermore, the "my spirit" that is poured out is literally, "my wind". The reading of Joel 3,1-5 (NRSV 2,28-32) is heavily influenced by its use in Acts 2,16-21 to justify God's revelation of Jesus to the world in the last days, but such usage plays a role in preventing interpreters from understanding its full significance. Joel 3,1-5 (NRSV 2,28-32) portrays the effects of the *Sharav* or *Hamsin*, the dry desert wind, much like the Santa Ana winds of the American southwest (which has a climate very much like that of the land of Israel), that blow into the land of Israel at the transition of the two major seasons, dry and rainy, of the year. When the *Sharav/Hamsin* blows full force, it fills the sky with dust and debris, blocking out the sun during the day and causing the moon to appear a deep blood red at night. Interpreters who spend little time in Israel (or Southern California) have little basis to understand this imagery and conclude that it represents eschatological transformation of the cosmos, but it merely depicts a recurring natural event. Indeed, the correlation of such natural and human events, such as the threat posed to Jerusalem first by the locusts in Joel 1,2-20 and then by foreign invaders in Joel 2,1-14, provides the underlying conceptual foundation of the book. It is for this reason that the natural event of the *Sharav/Hamsin* in Joel 3,1-5 (NRSV 2,28-32) is followed immediately by the portrayal of YHWH's defeat of the nations that threaten Jerusalem in the Valley of Jehoshaphat in Joel 4,1-17 (NRSV 3,1-17). Once Jerusalem is secured, Joel 4,18-21 (NRSV 3,18-21) concludes with the renewed fruitfulness of the land that Barton expects together with a recapitulation of the desolation brought upon nations such as Egypt and Edom for the innocent blood that they shed in Jerusalem and Judah. Joel 3-4 (and 2,15-27) is a classic portrayal of prophetic announcement of judgment against the nations that have afflicted Jerusalem and Judah to demonstrate how YHWH will answer the liturgical plea for protection in Joel 1,2-2,15. In addition to observations of the natural world, it also cites scripture – in whatever form it might have existed in the time of Joel – to demonstrate that just as YHWH acted in the past – against Egypt (Exodus) and against Edom (Obadiah; 2 Chronicles 20), and others – so YHWH will act once again to protect Jerusalem and Judah. This is no eschatological event; instead, it illustrates the workings of Temple ritual in the real world, particularly the lament forms that are so well known in the Psalms and elsewhere.

Barton's treatment of Obadiah presents two sets of issues that have

implications for the synchronic and diachronic reading of the book. At the synchronic level, he reiterates Georg Fohrer's well-known reading of the book as six form-critically defined units that together form a coherent literary entity. This analysis does not imply that the six constituent units are independent; it merely points to the formal organization of the whole. But at the diachronic level Barton also argues that the book must be divided into an authentic book of Obadiah in Obad 1-14.15b and a later text that he labels Deutero-Obadiah in Obad 15a.16-21. Again, the basis for his decision is the question of eschatology, i.e., the authentic Obadiah appears to be based in real events, whereas Deutero-Obadiah is concerned with an eschatologized Day of YHWH.

At first glance, one senses an appropriate interaction of synchronic and diachronic literary concerns, i.e., the synchronic analysis identifies the basic structure of the text, and it precedes the diachronic analysis. Nevertheless, there are questions to be raised in regard to both the synchronic and diachronic analysis of the text.

First is the question of the criteria employed to establish the six-part synchronic structure of the text, including four oracles against Edom (vv. 1b-4; 5-7; 8-11; 12-14.15b); one oracle against the nations (vv. 15a.16-18); and an oracle concerning Israel's restoration (vv. 19-21). Barton's use of Fohrer's analysis depends upon the presence of form-critical criteria that define the presence of a self-contained oracular unit, e.g., the formula *n'um yhwh* in v. 4, the threat against Edom in vv. 5-7 with a clear conclusion in v. 6, *bayyôm hahû'* in v. 8, etc. Although Barton is clear that he does not view the text as a collection of fragments, his structure allows only for the most basic of themes, viz., judgment against Edom, judgment against the nations, restoration for Israel. One might ask how the four oracles against Edom build upon each other to produce a progression of ideas. Barton does little to address the interrelationship of these units or the reasons for the specific sequence of text. One might also observe that Fohrer's criteria are hardly synchronic in nature. Note, for example the division of v. 15 so that its halves might be assigned to two discrete units, vv. 12-14.15b and vv. 15a. 16-18, or Fohrer's own rearrangement of vv. 5-7 so that v. 6 forms the conclusion to the unit. Fohrer's criteria are based in the diachronic concern to define an original unit in the history of the composition of this text. In the end, Barton's analysis does not point to a coherent text that develops a set of ideas; it appears instead to be a collection of oracles that are grouped together only by basic theme. A synchronic reading of the formal and thematic elements of this text (most notably the focus on "that day" beginning in v. 8) that takes into account their interrelationships within the whole produces a very different structure, i.e., following the superscription to the book in v. 1a, the body of the book in vv. 1b-21 comprises the prophet's presentation of the call to punish Edom in vv. 1b-7 and the prophetic announcement of judgment against Edom on the Day of YHWH in vv. 8-21.

Second, Barton's synchronic division of the text does provide the basis for his diachronic conclusions, but his criteria for differentiating vv. 1-14.15b and 15a.16-21 may be questioned. What constitutes real events for the former and eschatological events for the latter? As in Joel, a universalized Day of YHWH applied to all nations distinguishes the eschatological from the real.

And yet the condemnation of Edom in vv. 1-7 takes place in the midst of the nations from the beginning. In such a scenario, is Edom simply the first to be punished on the Day of YHWH? Indeed, different criteria for distinguishing diachronic layers in Obadiah are evident. Vv. 1-7 and 19-21 presuppose an exilic context, insofar as vv. 1-7 are dependent upon Jer 49,7-22 and vv. 19-21 are concerned with the exiles of Israel and Jerusalem. Vv. 8-18, on the other hand, presuppose Edom's actions against Israel and Judah, and the punishment of Edom by Jacob and Joseph, i.e., northern Israel, on behalf of a pillaged Jerusalem. Such a scenario easily relates to the ninth-eighth centuries, when Edom purportedly broke away from Jerusalem's control (2 Kgs 8,20-22), Jehoash emptied Jerusalem's treasuries to buy off the Arameans (2 Kgs 12,17-18), and Jeroboam ben Joash of Israel ultimately reestablished control of the land extended from Lebo Hamath to the Arabah (2 Kgs 14,23-29). This suggests that the later exilic period text recontextualized Obadiah 8-18 to address the circumstances of Edom's involvement in Jerusalem's destruction.

Barton's work is appropriately cautious and deserves serious consideration, particularly his calls for an end to the unwarranted denigration of ritual that has so frequently resulted in the dismissal of Joel and Obadiah as well as other "late" or "particularistic" Jewish literature. Nevertheless, it is perhaps time to reconsider some of the older models that have been employed to read Joel and Obadiah.

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Luca MAZZINGHI, *"Ho cercato e ho esplorato"*. Studi sul Qohelet (Collana BIBLICA). Bologna, Edizioni Dehoniane, 2001. 461 p. 15 x 21. € 30, 90

L'esegeta che si accinga a pubblicare attualmente uno studio sul libro del Qohelet è come preso dal timore di non riuscire a dire "nulla di nuovo" sull'argomento, rischiando, poi, di vedere il proprio lavoro aggiungersi ai tanti libri che "si moltiplicano senza fine". Il volume di L. Mazzinghi fa sicuramente eccezione, anche se l'autore non ha alcuna pretesa di proporre conclusioni definitive. Il titolo dell'opera: *"Ho cercato e ho esplorato"* fornisce la chiave di lettura di questo studio, che è ispirato dal desiderio di esplorare il mondo del Qohelet semplicemente con lo spirito di chi si avventura in un universo concettuale enigmatico e affascinante. Il lavoro nasce nel contesto della scuola, ma è destinato ad un pubblico più vasto che comprende anche gli studiosi. L'impostazione del volume è pertanto coerente con questa volontà di comunicare l'esito delle proprie ricerche in una forma accessibile a chiunque voglia accostarsi all'esegesi scientifica del Qohelet.

Nella prima parte L. Mazzinghi presenta lo *status quaestionis* relativo agli studi sul Qohelet e affronta le questioni generali: il problema dell'autore; la composizione e l'unità del libro; la struttura e il genere letterario; lo stile e il testo; l'ambiente storico e il contesto culturale; il problema della canonicità; la storia dell'interpretazione dai Padri della Chiesa ad oggi. Questa prima parte si conclude con una riflessione sulla perenne attualità del Qohelet, che parla all'uomo di sempre, sia esso credente sia ateo, purché si ponga a ricercare con serietà il senso vero della vita.

La seconda parte è dedicata all'esegesi di alcuni tra i testi più significativi: 1,1-11; 1,12-18; 3,1-15; 4,17-5, 6; 11,7-12,8; 12,9-14. L'analisi è condotta con l'ausilio del metodo storico-critico, che secondo il Mazzinghi è ancora lo strumento più valido per cogliere ciò che l'autore intende comunicare. Questa scelta metodologica fa sì che sia dato particolare rilievo al rapporto del Qohelet con il suo ambiente storico, culturale e religioso che ci riporta alla Giudea del III sec. a. C. La ricostruzione del contesto storico diventa poi decisiva per l'interpretazione del libro, il quale testimonia l'esistenza di un dibattito aperto non solo con la sapienza tradizionale e la fede giudaica del suo tempo ma anche con le correnti apocalittiche e con la cultura greca.

La terza parte mette in luce i temi fondamentali della riflessione del Qohelet, delineando l'apporto di una "teologia" articolata intorno ai temi di fondo del libro: lo *hebel*; la gioia; l'azione di Dio e il timor di Dio. In quest'ultima sezione del suo lavoro L. Mazzinghi esprime le conclusioni alle quali è giunto nel corso dell'indagine privilegiando ancora una volta l'inquadramento storico, che costituisce l'orizzonte ermeneutico nel quale occorre leggere l'opera del Qohelet. Il punto di riferimento essenziale è la Gerusalemme del III sec. a. C. e in particolare il giudaismo centrato sulla Legge e sul tempio. È contro questa forma di religiosità che Qohelet prende posizione e in particolare "contro la tentazione di considerare la Legge come uno strumento sufficiente di salvezza e quella di ritenere il culto e il tempio come l'unico mezzo possibile per entrare in rapporto con Dio" (362-363). È questa la parte più stimolante della ricerca del Mazzinghi, che accoglie in modo originale i risultati degli studi più recenti sul contesto storico del Qohelet richiamando l'attenzione, oltre che sul rapporto con la sapienza biblica e greca, sulle nuove correnti dell'enoichismo e dell'apocalittica, le cui speculazioni spingevano verso una visione escatologica della realtà pretendendo di offrire una soluzione definitiva al problema del male e della morte. Proprio questa pretesa Qohelet vuole contestare, opponendosi ad una sapienza che ritiene di poter comprendere tutto, arrivando a spiegare "il vero senso della realtà e persino del comportamento divino" (363). Secondo il Mazzinghi è però ugualmente importante sottolineare il confronto con la cultura greca che conduce Qohelet ad interrogarsi sul senso e sul valore della vita. Alla concezione greca, per la quale la gioia di vivere è una conquista dell'uomo, l'autore biblico oppone la visione tradizionale della sapienza ebraica, per la quale la gioia di vivere è dono di Dio, mostrando nello stesso tempo come la felicità non possa essere la conseguenza automatica dell'agire morale. Su questo tema Qohelet si rivela ugualmente critico nei confronti di una visione legalistica della condotta umana, che interpreta in modo riduttivo il dialogo tra Dio e l'uomo nei

termini del *do ut des*. Il tema della gioia di vivere è strettamente legato a quello del timor di Dio, che va di là dall'osservanza della Legge ed è "l'unico metro possibile per valutare il comportamento umano" (435). Il timor di Dio ha dunque una valenza conoscitiva, in quanto permette all'uomo di comprendere che la realtà ha un senso se considerata nell'ottica di tale "timore" (cf. 3,14). A conferma della sua interpretazione, L. Mazzinghi fa leva su uno dei testi più enigmatici del Qohelet: 7,15-18, in cui il timor di Dio diventa l'unica alternativa possibile all'illusione di salvarsi mediante la pratica scrupolosa della Legge o all'altra illusione, ancora più pericolosa, di poterla ignorare dandosi così alla malvagità e alla stoltezza. Qohelet ha dunque una concezione originale del timor di Dio, che si può spiegare solo alla luce di una precisa situazione storica e culturale che è quella dell'incontro di Israele con il mondo greco.

La ricerca di L. Mazzinghi ha il merito di spingere il lettore e lo studioso verso l'approfondimento del contesto storico del libro, allargando il campo d'indagine al rapporto tra il Qohelet e l'apocalittica giudaica e mostrando come avviene il confronto con le correnti del giudaismo palestinese. Il Mazzinghi opera una buona sintesi delle ricerche compiute di recente sull'ambiente storico, sforzandosi poi di passare al piano teologico nella piena convinzione della legittimità di tale procedimento che è perfettamente coerente con l'utilizzazione del metodo storico-critico. La parte finale del lavoro, che riassume la teologia del Qohelet, ci consente appunto di porre all'autore alcuni interrogativi in merito alle conclusioni alle quali è pervenuto. Esiste una priorità di temi o sono tutti sullo stesso piano? Che rapporto c'è tra i testi che riflettono sullo *hebel* e la tematica del timor di Dio? Se, come sembra, il problema della salvezza è centrale rispetto agli altri, come si giustifica tale priorità? Prima di affrontare l'esegesi di 4,17-5,6, che è tra le più approfondite, il Mazzinghi respinge, nella prima parte del lavoro, le conclusioni di N. Lohfink sulla centralità della pericope nella struttura del Qohelet (44), ma poi nell'analisi della pericope stessa (239-265) si limita al piano strettamente esegetico, senza entrare nel merito del ruolo che questo testo potrebbe svolgere nella struttura globale del libro.

Ancora una volta l'utilizzazione del metodo storico-critico rivela i suoi limiti, come lo stesso Mazzinghi riconosce a proposito del lavoro di M. Rose che, applicando al Qohelet i criteri della *Redaktionsgeschichte*, finisce col perdere di vista l'integrità del testo (33). Pur accogliendo in pieno le conclusioni di tutti quegli esegeti che si sono sforzati con l'ausilio del metodo sincronico di comprendere l'organizzazione interna del testo, l'autore ne respinge in linea di principio la metodologia, condizionato dal sospetto che "il ricorso massiccio ed esclusivo ad altri metodi tradisca, almeno in qualche caso, la voglia di dire qualcosa di nuovo a tutti i costi, visto che specialmente sul Qohelet tutto è già stato detto" (10). Pertanto le conclusioni del lavoro, pur sintetizzando brillantemente gli apporti più costruttivi dell'esegesi recente, non risultano pienamente giustificate sul piano metodologico proprio per la prevalenza della prospettiva diacronica su quella sincronica. La ricostruzione del contesto storico precede l'esegesi dei testi e ne determina l'orizzonte interpretativo, anziché scaturire dagli interrogativi che lo stesso Qohelet pone ai suoi in-

terlocutori o dalle tensioni presenti nel libro. Sarebbe stato forse preferibile conciliare in maniera più equilibrata sincronia e diacronia, partendo dall'esegesi delle pericopi più significative, con le relative problematiche, per poi passare all'ambiente storico e culturale. È la natura stessa del testo qoheletiano, tanto ricco di interrogativi e di enigmi, a suggerire un approccio metodologico alternativo rispetto a quelli tradizionali. Ma probabilmente un lavoro di questo genere avrebbe richiesto un'impostazione diversa della ricerca, incentrata sull'analisi dei testi più che sulla sintesi dei dati. Ciò avrebbe consentito all'autore di valorizzare il "novum" di questo studio, che apporta un contributo originale all'interpretazione del Qohelet. Prevale invece l'esigenza didattica, che spinge il nostro autore a fornire il maggior numero possibile di informazioni sacrificando così il taglio originale del lavoro.

Nelle sue conclusioni L. Mazzinghi si pone sulla linea della piena valorizzazione del tema del "timor di Dio", ma resta problematico il rapporto che sussiste tra il corpo del libro e il secondo epiloghista, che con la sua ammonizione a osservare i comandamenti, intende valorizzare proprio la Legge come unica possibilità di salvezza per l'uomo. L'epilogo, secondo il Mazzinghi, non è pienamente in linea con il contenuto del libro, che è interessato piuttosto a mostrare come l'osservanza dei comandamenti non sia di per sé garanzia di salvezza. Pur riconoscendone il valore, l'autore liquida il testo del secondo epiloghista ripiegando sull'interpretazione più comune della glossa ortodossa (356). E se invece la chiave ermeneutica del Qohelet si trovasse proprio nei versetti finali del libro? Nei vv. 13-14, in cui ricorrono il termine *kol* e la radice *'lm*, l'epilogista potrebbe aver condiviso la reazione del Qohelet alle correnti apocalittiche, in cui questi stessi termini erano utilizzati frequentemente. Riconducendo esclusivamente a Dio tanto il giudizio quanto la conoscenza di ciò che è nascosto, l'autore dei vv. 13-14 ha forse sottolineato la fedeltà del messaggio di Qohelet alla tradizione, in opposizione ai tanti sapienti che con sogni e rivelazioni sulla realtà ultraterrena rischiavano di allontanare il giudaismo dalla sapienza ebraica, così solidamente orientata ai valori terreni e all'osservanza dei comandamenti.

Al tema del timor di Dio, infine, L. Mazzinghi riconosce un'importanza fondamentale anche dal punto conoscitivo, ma la portata epistemologica del timor di Dio è tale da bilanciare le numerose dichiarazioni di Qohelet sull'incapacità della sapienza umana di afferrare il senso della realtà? In nessuno dei testi presi in considerazione (neanche 3,14) è detto esplicitamente che il timor di Dio consenta all'uomo di comprendere ciò che la sapienza non è in grado di cogliere (8,16-17). Rispetto al tema del timor di Dio la tematica dello *hebel* risulta, nello studio del Mazzinghi, troppo ridimensionata mentre avrebbe richiesto una trattazione più organica, facendo ad esempio precedere l'*excursus* sul termine *hebel* all'esegesi dei passi così da poter prendere posizione in merito al significato del termine nel contesto delle pericopi analizzate. Non era comunque nelle intenzioni dell'autore produrre uno studio destinato esclusivamente agli specialisti. Risultano invece pienamente raggiunte le finalità che L. Mazzinghi si era prefisso nel suo lavoro: guidare il lettore alla scoperta del Qohelet e fornire anche allo studioso un utile aggiornamento sugli studi più recen-

ti. Chi non ha mai studiato il Qohelet trova in questo lavoro una copiosa fonte di informazioni che costituiscono una solida base per il suo primo approccio a un testo così complesso e appassionante. Il commento delle pericopi più significative è preceduto da una bibliografia aggiornata, che informa i lettori sugli studi più recenti senza trascurare i commenti tradizionali. Pur essendo rigorosa, l'analisi dei testi è condotta in una forma accessibile anche ai lettori meno interessati alle discussioni di critica testuale e all'analisi filologica. Ma soprattutto è apprezzabile lo sforzo dell'autore di far comprendere il senso del testo, superando i limiti di un'esegesi scientifica a volte troppo arida e poco significativa sotto il profilo ermeneutico. Nello stesso tempo questo studio apre nuove prospettive di ricerca agli esegeti per quanto riguarda l'ambiente storico e in particolare il rapporto tra il Qohelet e la sapienza apocalittica.

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Novum Testamentum

Étienne NODET, *Le Fils de Dieu. Procès de Jésus et évangiles* (Josèphe et son temps 4), Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2002, XVII-346 pp. 12,5 × 19,5. 28,00€.

De temps en temps dans le panorama exégétique apparaissent des ouvrages qui vont à contre-courant, au moins contre le courant de la majorité. L'étude de l'A. appartient à ce genre de publications. E. Nodet, spécialiste de Flavius Josèphe, professeur à l'École Biblique de Jérusalem, avait déjà surpris la recherche néotestamentaire il y a quatre ans par une étude, en collaboration avec J. Taylor, sur les origines du christianisme. Or, le livre qu'il vient de publier en est le «prolongement direct» (VI). Dès la première ligne du texte, et avec une clarté à laquelle nous devons être reconnaissants, l'A. formule sa thèse: le christianisme primitif d'empreinte païenne n'a pas bâti une christologie qui diviniserait l'homme Jésus, mais, au contraire, face aux affirmations «judéo-chrétiennes» sur la divinité de Jésus, il s'est vu obligé d'en souligner l'humanité. Le déploiement christologique, pour ainsi dire, présent dans le Nouveau Testament aurait donc corrigé des conceptions antérieures qui n'auraient pas tenu compte de la réalité de l'incarnation et de la passion comme sacrifice réel. Dit d'une autre manière, le christianisme plus ancien ne serait pas celui du kérygme pascal (le Christ mort et ressuscité) mais le kérygme du Jésus divin ou, si l'on veut, Fils de Dieu, confessé tel quel par une communauté de disciples fortement liés au judaïsme. Plus tard, «une branche... très marginale à l'origine» (VII), celle qui aurait en propres le kérygme pascal et la mission païenne, aurait triomphé, comme on peut le constater dans les écrits du Nouveau Testament.

L'auteur a fait d'immenses efforts pour prouver cette thèse. Il travaille en historien, autrement dit, il utilise la méthode historique et la critique littéraire pour justifier des conclusions qui cependant mettent en question ce qu'une bonne partie de la recherche actuelle considère comme des données acquises ou, au moins, largement partagées. Les choix de l'A. constituent à cet égard un défi. Il accorde une priorité heuristique absolue à l'évangile de Jean et relègue les évangiles synoptiques au second plan. Il adopte résolument l'hypothèse Griesbach pour les évangiles synoptiques et considère que Marc, l'évangile le plus «grec», dépendrait de Matthieu et Luc, et qu'il aurait été écrit au II^e siècle av.- J.C. Par contre, Jean, très influencé par le judaïsme, devrait être placé avant la destruction de Jérusalem et serait donc l'évangile le plus ancien. Une preuve en serait le récit johannique de la passion, lequel, tel que nous l'avons aujourd'hui, refléterait le stade le plus ancien de la tradition. Ce récit est déterminant pour l'hypothèse de l'A., en particulier 19,8 (réaction terrifiée de Pilate devant la prétention divine de Jésus). Par contre, les matériaux synoptiques se rapportant au ministère de Jésus ne seraient pas significatifs; en fait, ils ne sont pas utilisés dans l'enquête (par exemple, la confession de Pierre: Mt 16,16; Lc 9,20 et Jn 6,69!). La deuxième priorité heuristique revient aux témoignages sur Jésus que l'on trouve chez les auteurs romains Tacite et Suétone et, surtout, chez Josèphe. L'historien juif apporte plusieurs éléments à l'hypothèse de l'A.: le *Testimonium Flavianum* (AJ 18,63-64) aussi bien que la traduction slavone de la *Guerre Juive* sont considérés comme authentiques et sans interpolations chrétiennes. D'après l'A., ces deux documents montreraient que la nature divine de Jésus est une question purement juive. La troisième priorité heuristique avait déjà été annoncée dans l'étude mentionnée de Nodet-Taylor: la doctrine essénienne constitue le milieu d'origine du christianisme primitif. Pour ce qui est de notre cas, l'A. s'appuie sur I. Knohl (*L'autre Messie* [Paris 2001], traduction de l'hébreu) pour postuler l'usage essénien de trois thèmes rattachés à Jésus par le christianisme primitif: Dieu / Fils de Dieu, le roi-Messie et le Serviteur souffrant exalté. Ces trois thèmes se trouveraient dans deux hymnes de Qumrân, d'ailleurs très mal conservés et qu'on a dû reconstituer avec des fragments plutôt illisibles et qui n'aboutissent pas à un texte unitaire. M. Baillet les a appelés «Cantique de l'archange Michel» et «Cantique des Justes» (cfr. 149-154 de l'A. avec une reconstitution). Or, Knohl a mis ces fragments en rapport avec un personnage historique précis: l'essénien Menahem, qui a vécu au temps d'Hérode et qui aurait rédigé le premier hymne. L'A. ne va pas si loin et se limite à constater que «l'hymne représente une expérience analogue à celle de Menahem» (202). En tout cas, ces hymnes montreraient que «le débat sur les frontières entre l'humain et le divin... est d'abord un débat juif, ce qui n'empêche pas que l'idée même de divinisation... soit d'origine gréco-romaine» (234). En effet, le premier fils de Dieu aurait été Octave Auguste, le fils du divin Jules César. Cette idée romaine de la filiation divine aurait pénétré le monde juif et, à travers celui-ci, le christianisme primitif.

Les analyses montrent que l'information de l'A. sur les sujets traités est suffisante et mise à jour, ce qui est certainement un mérite dans une étude de portée aussi large et complexe. Des annotations et des remarques créatives, même audacieuses, se succèdent tout au long de l'ouvrage et le lecteur est bien mené à comprendre la construction de son hypothèse. Les arguments

apportés ne peuvent que surprendre, et même si on peut être en désaccord avec eux, ils doivent être toujours soupesés. En plus, il arrive que l'A. inclue des développements qu'on a revalorisé volontiers au cours des dernières recherches, comme la validité des éléments historiques présents dans le récit johannique de la passion ou bien l'affirmation du caractère strictement orthodoxe du judaïsme galiléen. L'A. est convaincu de la validité de son hypothèse et le lecteur se trouve immergé dans une perspective clairement définie et présentée, en outre absente de tout complexe.

Sans doute l'A. se rend compte de la singularité de ses hypothèses mais il ne paraît pas très intéressé à entamer une discussion approfondie avec ceux qui défendent des positions contraires ou différentes des siennes. En ce sens, l'absence d'index et de bibliographie finale augmente la difficulté pour dialoguer avec l'A. et évaluer les hypothèses qu'il présente dans les cinq chapitres du livre. Les voici: 1) «La passion: récits difficiles» (1-71). C'est une partie qui montre les problèmes historiques qui touchent les récits synoptiques de la passion. 2) «Évangile primitif?» (72-146). Dans ce chapitre, qui insiste –très justement– sur la judaïté de Jean, on voudrait, en quatre pages (138-141), convaincre le lecteur que la divinité du Messie est une donnée du Nouveau Testament (on mentionne Jean, Paul, les pastorales... mais pas les Synoptiques, où elle est aussi clairement exprimée) mais qu'elle est en même temps une donnée du judaïsme (en tout cas, on ne cite qu'un seul texte, très tardif, pris du Talmud de Babylone, *bBB* 75a, qui, d'ailleurs, ne mentionne que le nom du Messie et non son «identité divine intrinsèque», comme A, lui même, le reconnaît à la p. 141). La conclusion est, en tout cas, que Jean n'a rien à voir avec les Synoptiques et, donc avec l'Évangile primitif. 3) «Contexte juif et fils de Dieu» (147-235). C'est le chapitre central de l'ouvrage et de l'hypothèse de l'A., qui, à la suite de Knohl, reprend les deux hymnes de Qumrân mentionnés et, en plus, les oracles d'Hystaspès (transmis par Lactance) et un fragment araméen de Daniel (4Q 246). Tous ces matériaux, ainsi que l'Apocalypse de Jean et quelques textes sur le culte à l'empereur mènent l'auteur à conclure que l'idée de la filiation divine a de claires origines romaines, tandis que les sources bibliques n'en donnent «qu'un contour estompé» (210). En effet, l'analogie de Menahem l'essénien, qui aurait été acclamé par ses fidèles comme étant au-dessus des anges, suggérerait «qu'il existait avant Jésus un langage pour le qualifier comme serviteur souffrant exalté au premier rang de la cour céleste» (231). 4) «Autres sources sur Jésus» (236-316). Cette partie est surtout consacrée aux données sur Jésus et Jean-Baptiste fournies par la version slavone de la *Guerre Juive*. Jean-Baptiste y est appelé le «sauvage», et on devrait s'appliquer à le distinguer du «thaumaturge», c'est-à-dire Jésus. Cette version de BJ se situerait dans une ambiance tout à fait convenable pour le Jésus historique, sans aucun rapport avec la dimension biblique (les Écritures juives) ni les constructions christologiques de la communauté chrétienne au sens strict du terme (la confession de Jésus le Christ, mort et ressuscité). L'importance accordée par l'A. au Josèphe slavon est très grande. 5) «La Passion: récits synthétiques» (317-343). Ce dernier chapitre voudrait fournir une deuxième figure emblématique du Serviteur souffrant, Jacques, le frère du Seigneur, lapidé en 62 av.-J.C. Jacques représente, d'après l'A., le dirigeant du mouvement le plus primitif des disciples qui auraient confessé le rang divin de Jésus, sa condition de fils de Dieu, mais qui n'en auraient pas accepté la mort

sur la croix: le kérygme de la résurrection le plus primitif serait seulement arrivé avec Paul, vrai chrétien par contraste avec Jacques qui serait «resté strictement juif» (342). Paul est donc le premier «chrétien», tandis que Jacques est le dernier «jésuen»: à la fin de son livre, l'A. tombe, de façon presque inconsciente, sur la thèse libérale qu'il avait voulu combattre dès le début de l'ouvrage. Jésus reste un juif de rang divin, tandis que Paul, l'helléniste, est le créateur véritable de la figure du Christ confessé et, par conséquent, celui qui pose les bases du christianisme!

L'ouvrage d'E. Nodet contient maints dossiers exégétiques et historiques et, pour cette raison, il invite à ne pas s'en tenir tranquillement sur les positions de la majorité. L'origine et le sens du titre «Fils de Dieu» dans les différentes traditions interprétatives néotestamentaires continue à soulever beaucoup de questions. L'A., bon connaisseur du monde gréco-romain et du judaïsme ancien, nous montre comment franchir la distance qui sépare l'un et l'autre et comment envisager les sources respectives de façon globale et reliée. Cependant, il n'est pas toujours facile de le suivre dans ses analyses, trop rapides ou trop unilatérales. Prenons quelques exemples. A la p. 187 on affirme que, dans les deux hymnes de Qumrân mentionnés, «le héros, pour abolir le mal... l'a porté» et on cite Is 53,12: ceci serait la preuve que la théologie chrétienne de la rédemption est née dans le cadre de la pensée essénienne. Il s'agit d'une conclusion majeure qui voudrait trouver à Qumran, et non dans les textes de l'Ancien Testament, la source de ce theologoumenon chrétien. Cependant lorsqu'on relit les textes des deux hymnes reconstitués (151-154) on y découvre le thème de l'exaltation («personne ne sera exalté sauf moi... car je siège... [aux cieux]») à côté de celui de la souffrance («qui, comme moi, a suppor[té] des afflictions?»), mais il n'y a aucune traces de la pensée d'Is 53,12: «il a porté le péché de beaucoup». Par contre, il paraît évident que le quatrième chant du Serviteur souffrant constitue un arrière-fond suffisant pour des textes comme Jn 1,29 ou Rm 5,19 ou Hb 9,28 ou 1 P 2,24. Pourquoi s'en tenir exclusivement à Qumran? D'autre part, ce theologoumenon, comme l'A. lui-même le reconnaît à propos d'Auguste, reste étranger à la tradition des «hommes divins»: «leur mort n'a jamais été salvatrice» (212). À quoi sert donc d'insister sur le modèle d'Octave Auguste comme personne élevée au rang divin si cette élévation se place dans le domaine individuel et n'a aucune conséquence collective? C'est la même question qu'on peut poser à propos de l'apocryphe araméen de Daniel (4Q 246), où d'ailleurs le «fils de Dieu» est l'adversaire et non le juste qui souffre! On peut même se demander si l'A. n'a pas nivelé trois expressions différentes: «fils de dieux» (les anges ou les membres de la cour céleste), «fils de dieu» (personne choisie par Dieu lui-même d'une manière toute spéciale) et «Fils de Dieu» (personne unique dans le monde et l'histoire). L'A. affirme que, effectivement, celui-ci est le cas d'Auguste, qui s'est fait appeler «divi Caesaris filius», «sauveur» et «bienfaiteur». Mais c'est sûr que les souverains des royaumes hellénistiques s'étaient attribués des dénominations semblables: l'union du pouvoir politique et divinisation du roi est tout à fait normale dans les grandes cultures de l'Orient ancien. Dans ce cas encore l'A. résiste à introduire dans son enquête les matériaux provenant de l'Ancien Testament, même s'il est vrai qu'on doit reconnaître avec lui que le sujet de la filiation divine y occupe une place plutôt discrète.

L'A. soulève beaucoup de questions chez le lecteur, et il est

compréhensible que le recenseur aime terminer son apport, lui aussi sur quelques observations. Quelle est la place que l'A. accorde aux processus de tradition-rédaction dans l'interprétation des textes bibliques, surtout ceux du Nouveau Testament, analysés dans son ouvrage? Est-il critiquement et historiquement démontrable que, lors du procès de Jésus, les juifs ont accusé celui-ci devant Pilate de s'être déclaré Fils de Dieu, tel qu'on le lit dans Jn 19,7, et que le gouverneur romain a vu dans ce titre une concurrence directe de son maître, l'empereur (v. 8)? Peut-on qualifier l'ensemble de la passion chez Marc comme la plus tardive parce qu'elle est la plus hellénisée, sans tenir compte du fait que Matthieu, un auteur qui connaît de près le monde juif, l'a reprise presque totalement? Peut-on reléguer Rm 1,4 (cfr. 213-214), un texte probablement prépaulinien qui relie (!) la filiation divine à la résurrection? Et encore, l'A. ne devrait-il pas prendre plus au sérieux sa très juste remarque sur le «docétisme spontané» (301) de la version slavone de la *Guerre Juive*, c'est-à-dire, sur la possibilité que ce texte, central dans son hypothèse, ne soit plus tardif qu'il le suppose?

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John D. TURNER, *Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic Tradition* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, Section "Études" 6). Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval – Louvain – Paris, Peeters, 2001. xix-842 p. 16 × 24.

This massive work is really three books in one, consisting of three book-size parts, preceded by an introduction (ch. 1) and followed by a summarizing chapter of conclusions (ch. 17). In his introductory chapter the author surveys previous scholarship on Gnosticism, and particularly its relationship to Platonism. Three options have been put forward as to this relationship: Gnosticism as Platonism, Platonism as incipient Gnosticism, and Gnosticism and Platonism as interdependent. Turner advocates the third option, and also stresses the importance of Jewish traditions in the development of Gnosticism.

The first part of the book is devoted to Sethian Gnosticism. Chapter 2 is a survey of the literature of Gnostic Sethians. The primary texts consist of fourteen treatises from the Nag Hammadi Codices, one from the Berlin Gnostic Codex, plus one from the Bruce Codex, all of them extant only in

Coptic translations of Greek originals. They are: *The Apocryphon of John* (NHC II,1; III,1; IV,1; BG,2); *The Hypostasis of the Archons* (NHC II,4); *The Holy Book of the Invisible Spirit*, also called *The Gospel of the Egyptians* (III,2; NHC IV,2); *The Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V,5); *The Three Steles of Seth* (NHC VII,5); *Zostrianos* (VIII,1); *Marsanes* (NHC X,1); *Melchizedek* (NHC IX,1); *The Thought of Norea* (NHC IX,2); *Allogenes* (NHC XI,3); *The Trimorphic Protennoia* (NHC XIII,1); and the untitled text in the Bruce Codex. The primary texts are supplemented by patristic accounts by Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.29-30), Epiphanius (*Pan.* 16; 39-40), Ps.-Tertullian (*Haer.* 2), Theodoret (*Haer. Fab.* 1.13-14), and Filastrius (*Div. her.* 3). Special attention is given to *Ap. John*, “the Sethian Revelation *par excellence*” (69). Turner divides the Sethian literature into treatises featuring a “Descent Pattern” of soteriology (enlightenment by a descending redeemer) and an “Ascent Pattern” (enlightenment by contemplative ascent). Reflected in the Sethian literature is a variety of literary genres: apocalypse, testament, didactic treatise, revelation discourse and dialogue, self-predicatory aretology, liturgical manual, and ritual etiology (88).

In chapter 3 Turner discusses interdependencies among the Sethian treatises, first those of the “descent pattern”. Irenaeus *Haer.* 1.29 is dependent on a version of the theogonic and cosmogonic sections of *Ap. John*. The longer version of *Ap. John* (represented by NHC II,1 and IV,1) contains a long citation from a “book of Zoroaster” and a self-predicatory hymn attributed to a feminine revealer called Pronoia (=Barbelo), on which *Trim. Prot.* is based. *Melch.* is a “Sethianized” version of a Christian apocalypse. *Ap. Adam* shares mythological and ritual features with *Gos. Eg. Norea*, consisting of hymnic invocations of the Sethian divine Triad, expands on a section of *Hyp. Arch.* Similar interdependencies occur among the “Platonizing” treatises with the “ascent pattern”, but a section of *Allogenes* corresponds almost word-for-word with the “negative theology” with which the main section of *Ap. John* opens.

In chapter 4 Turner sets forth a chronology of Sethian compositions featuring the “descent pattern”. The earliest Sethian compositions (100-125 C.E.) are hymnic accounts of the Savior’s descent, including the Pronoia hymn of *Ap. John* and the earliest version of *Trim. Prot.*, for which Turner posits three stages of composition. “Christianized” Sethian treatises from c. 125-150+ include an early version of *Ap. John*, prior to its conversion into a dialogue between Christ and John, and an early version of *Trim. Prot.* Turner posits a period of “Sethian-Christian polemic” (150-175+) reflected in *Apoc. Adam*, *Hyp. Arch.*, and *Norea*. “Thoroughly Christianized Sethianism” (175-200+) is represented by *Gos. Eg.* and *Melch.* The “Platonizing” treatises featuring the “ascent pattern”, treated in chapter 5, belong to the third century, when a “Sethian rapprochement with Platonism” was taking place. They are placed in the following order: *Zostrianos*, *Allogenes* (both of these read in Plotinus’ school in Rome according to Porphyry [*Vit. Plot.* 16]), *Steles Seth*, *Marsanes*, and Bruce *Untitled*.

The “building blocks of Sethian doctrine” are discussed in chapter 6. These consist of Hellenistic Jewish wisdom speculation, wherein the figure of Sophia is split into several figures; interpretation of Genesis 1-9, from which a “Sethite sacred history” is developed; and a tradition of baptism, featuring

a ritual of five “seals”. The “Christianization” of Sethianism taking place during the second century consists primarily of the identification of Christ with various figures in Sethian mythology. Although Middle-Platonic influence is to be found in Sethian Gnosticism from the beginning, especially in its cosmology and anthropology, a more pronounced influence from Platonism is to be seen in the later treatises featuring a tradition of “self-performable mystical ascent toward and beyond the realm of pure being” (250).

Chapter 7 is potentially the most controversial in the book. In it Turner attempts to set forth a history of the Sethian movement as reflected in our sources, and delineates six phases. 1. Two distinct groups existed at the beginning of the second century: A. the “Barbeloites” discussed by Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.29), whose theogony included a triad of Father, Mother (Ennoia-Barbelo), and Son, and who also had a baptismal rite; and B. “Sethites”, biblical exegetes who styled themselves the “seed of Seth”, who had an alternative divine triad and who crafted the anthropogonies common to *Ap. John*, *Hyp. Arch.*, *Apoc. Adam*, and the “Ophites” of Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.30). Both of these groups arose in a Hellenistic-Jewish context. 2. “Barbeloites” amalgamated with Christian baptizing groups, and incorporated Christ into their mythology. 3. In the later second century “these Christianized ‘Barbeloites’ amalgamated with the ‘Sethites’ to form gnostic Sethianism” (259). 4. By the end of the second century Sethianism had become “estranged from a Christianity increasingly on the road to a polemical orthodoxy” (259). 5. Sethians, universally rejected by ecclesiastical heresiologists, became attracted to the contemplative practices of second- and third-century Platonists. 6. In the late third century Sethians also became estranged from “orthodox Platonism” (260). By the late fourth century Sethianism had become fragmented into various derivative groups.

Part Two is devoted to the Platonic tradition and gives special attention to those doctrines which are useful for understanding the metaphysics underlying the Platonizing Sethian treatises. Chapter 8 is devoted to the beginnings of Platonic speculation on first principles, discussing Plato and the Old Academy (Aristotle, Speusippus, Xenocrates), and the Old Pythagoreans. Middle-Platonic speculation on first principles is taken up in chapter 9, with discussions of the revival of Platonism in the first cent BCE, Neopythagorean Platonism (Eudorus of Alexandria and Philo of Alexandria), and Middle Platonism (Moderatus of Gades, Plutarch of Cheironeia, Nicomachus of Gerasa, Theon of Smyrna, Alcinous [Ps.-Albinus], Numenius of Apamea, the Chaldaean Oracles, and the Anonymous *Parmenides* Commentary sometimes attributed to Porphyry). Neo-Platonic speculation on first principles is treated in chapter 10 (Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Theodore of Asine). Theodore is given special attention because Turner thinks that the tractate *Marsanes* reflects his influence. Chapter 11 treats the doctrines of body and soul in Platonism from Plato to Plotinus, and knowledge of God in Platonism.

The Platonizing treatises (*Steles Seth*, *Zost.*, *Marsanes*, and *Allogenes*, plus Bruce *Untitled*) are the focus of Part 3. In chapter 12 the divine and cosmic hierarchy of these treatises is analyzed, focusing on the “Realm beyond Being” and the “Realm of True Being”. *Marsanes* is unique in

positing a more supreme principal than the transcendent Invisible Spirit of the other treatises, i.e. “the unknown Silent one”. In that respect the metaphysics of Iamblichus and Theodore of Asine provide an analogy. In the realm of True Being the Aeon of Barbelo is now no longer a saving Mother-Wisdom figure, but “remains above as a divine Intellect, beckoning Sethians to learn a technique of self-performable ecstatic visionary ascent” (555). In chapter 13 the psychic and natural realms below the Barbelo aeon are discussed.

Sethian doctrines of the soul is the subject of chapter 14, where ritual and theurgical practices are discussed in connection with the soul’s ascent. Knowledge of God in these treatises is the subject of chapter 15. In chapter 16, devoted to “Sethian Gnosticism and the Platonic tradition”, the encounter between Sethianism and Platonism is discussed, with special attention to the school of Plotinus in Rome with its critique of Sethian Gnostic writings. *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* are seen to be contemporary with, or slightly prior to Plotinus’ *floruit* in Rome, as well as the *Three Steles of Seth* (not mentioned by Porphyry in *Vit. Plot.* 16). *Marsanes* is dated to 300-325, and Bruce *Untitled* even later, since it probably refers to *Marsanes*.

This brief summary of Turner’s book cannot do justice to a work of such magnitude. Turner has mastered the content and interrelationships of all of the “Sethian Gnostic” treatises discussed in Part 1. In Part 2 he shows that he has become a master of the history of Platonic metaphysics. With their impressive erudition and clarity of thought and expression, those chapters constitute a valuable contribution to the study of Platonic philosophy. Part 3 is especially impressive, particularly his discussions of *Zostrianos* and *Marsanes*, both of which are in a lamentably fragmentary state of preservation, and for which conjectural restoration of lacunae is necessary, uncertain as some of the readings might be. In that respect, Turner is the beneficiary of the latest editions of those treatises, to which he himself has made substantial contributions (C. Barry – W.-P. Funk – P.-H. Poirier – J.D. Turner, *Zostrien* (NH VIII, 1) [BCNH Section “Textes” 24; Québec – Louvain – Paris 2000; Idem, *Marsanès* (NH X) [BCNH Section “Textes” 27; Québec – Louvain – Paris 2000]). As for his treatment of *Marsanes*, his late dating would seem to contradict his suggestion (195) that *Marsanes* was known to the author of an apocalypse of Nicotheos, quoted in Bruce *Untitled* and mentioned by Porphyry as known to members of Plotinus’ school (*Vit. Plot.* 16), i.e. during the period 244-69 (cf. 198). I agree with Turner that the metaphysics of *Marsanes* and its references to theurgic ritual call for comparison with Iamblichus, but I see no actual dependence upon Iamblichus, or upon Iamblichus’ student Theodore of Asine.

Particularly problematic is Turner’s handling of comparisons between *Ap. John* and Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.29 and 1.30), and his reconstruction of the earliest stages of Sethian Gnostic history. In truth, Irenaeus knew nothing of people called “Barbeloites” (*Haer.* 1.29) or “Ophites” (*Haer.* 1.30); those names were used by Theodoret in his adaptation of Irenaeus (Βαρβηλιῶται, Σηθητιανοὶ ἢ Ὀφίτιοι ἢ Ὀφίται). The Rousseau-Doutreleau edition of Irenaeus rightly suppresses “Barbelo” as a secondary gloss at 1.29.1: “multitudo Gnosticorum” [Barbelo], “a multitude of Gnostics”. Thus, the people mentioned in *Adversus Haereses* 1.29-30 were called (or called themselves) “Gnostics”, the same people referred to collectively as “the so-

called Gnostic school of thought" (*Haer.* 1.11). That school apparently consisted of subgroups: "quidem enim eorum ...", "some of them, indeed ...", i.e. "some of the Gnostics" (*Haer.* 1.29.1) ... "alii autem ...", "but others [scil. of the Gnostics] ..." (*Haer.* 1.30.1). And it should be noted that the parallels between Irenaeus' account and *Ap. John* are not restricted to material in 1.29, for there are also parallels between material in 1.30 and the second part of *Ap. John*. Thus, on the evidence available to us, there is no justification for speaking of two separate groups called "Barbeloites" and "pre-Sethian Sethites". Strictly speaking, "Sethian Gnosticism" is a scholarly construct, perhaps justified, however, on the basis of the role played by Seth in its mythological system.

These comments aside, Turner's magisterial work is an exceedingly important contribution to scholarship on the ancient Gnostic religion.

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